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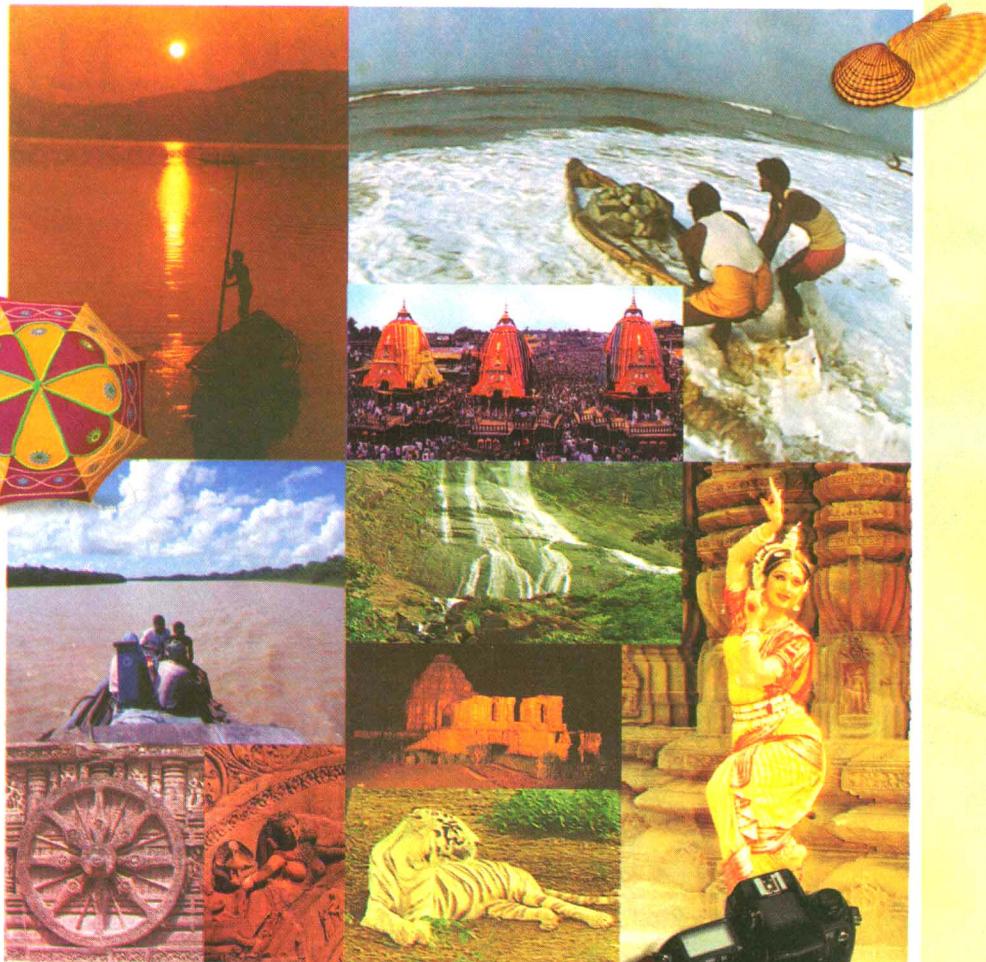


Beginning in this issue
a new serial

GARUDA The Invincible (in comics)

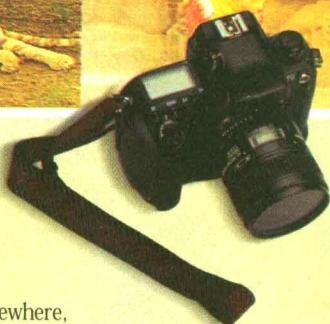
Wishing our readers a very Happy New Year

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ORISSA
The soul of India

CHANDAMAMA

Vol. 31 January 2001 No. 1

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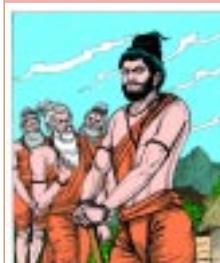
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HIGHLIGHTS



Saga of India



**Saga
of
Vishnu**



Mystery of a title



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Founded by
B. Nagi Reddi and Chakrapani

Welcome to a new millennium

Whether the year 2000 was the beginning of a new century and a new millennium or not was a debatable issue. Today nobody can raise that question. If not January 2000, January 2001 indisputably marks a new era.

We know more or less what was happening at this time a hundred years ago. It was a different world—without any cars, planes, TV, radio, internet, E-mail, etc, etc. But how was our country a thousand years ago? The building of two great monuments, the Brihadeeswara temple at Thanjavur and the Lingaraj temple at Bhubaneshwar had just been completed; on the other hand, Muhammad of Ghazni plundered several cities of India and destroyed invaluable monuments. In other words, construction and destruction were simultaneous. That is what has happened always through the centuries.

Through the ages, great minds have told us not to fall a prey to our destructive impulses, but to use time for constructive and creative work. Many of the problems, if not all, are really in our minds. We try to solve them by destroying something. But nothing is solved that way. A classic case is the division of India. We thought that the Hindu-Muslim problem would be solved by cutting apart the country. The problem was not solved. The issues were complicated. The conflict continues, because it is in the mind, not in the good earth.

We can achieve wonders if we remember this truth; if we can prepare our minds to live as one humanity. That is the call of the new century and the new millennium. All said and done, it is going to be one world. The sooner we realize it the better.

Newsflash

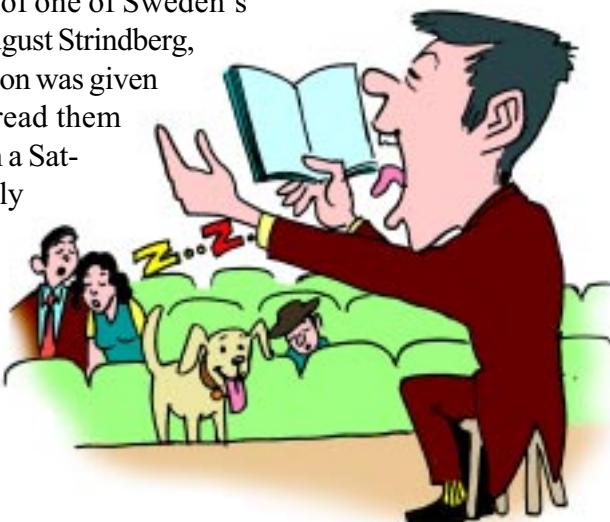
Records 2000

The year 2000 saw some unique records being made or created.



- How about holding on to a microphone for 104 hours? That is what Burhan Mohtaruddin, a disc-jockey of Malaysia, did in October. He was working for Best 104 Radio in Kuala Lumpur. He started playing discs and waxing eloquent about the music and songs in them on a Sunday and completed his assignment the following Friday. Of course, he took a break for 15 minutes every six hours. Incidentally, the earlier record was 10 hours less.

• Lars-Goeran Carlson is a movie actor of Sweden who is familiar with delivering dialogues in films. At the book fair in Malmo in September, he undertook to read aloud stories; no he was not reading out to children, but to grown-ups. At the fair, the books of one of Sweden's most celebrated authors, August Strindberg, were being promoted. Carlson was given five of his books and he read them non-stop for 25 hours, from a Saturday to Sunday, taking only a five minute break every one hour. The earlier record was 24 hours 24 minutes. Fortunately, Carlson did not lose his voice, but he had to strain not to fall asleep! How about his listeners? one wonders.

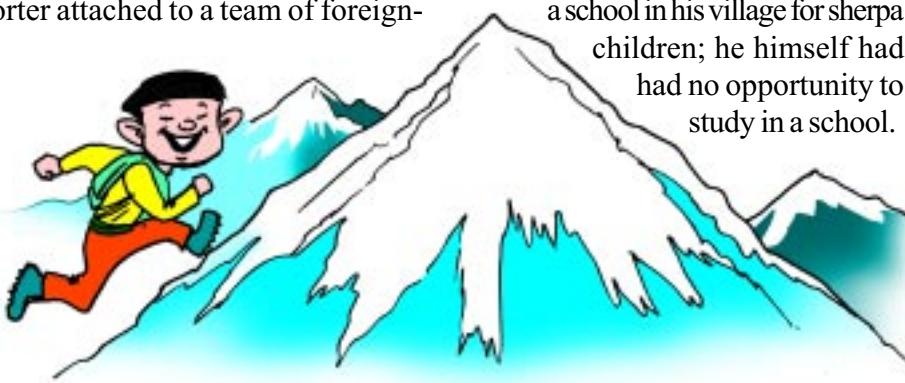


• A message written by Hans Schwarz of Austria went back to him after 44 years, though not through post. Schwarz was on board a ship heading for Australia to see the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games. He wrote a message in English and German, sealed it in a bottle, and threw it into the Indian Ocean. The sea could have taken it anywhere, but Schwarz had the surprise of his life, when the bottle was washed ashore on a New Zealand beach, not far away from where he has settled down after leaving Austria for good. It is a million to one chance, he remarked, when he was informed about the find sometime in October.



• When most of the Everesters usually take two to four days to reach the summit from the base camp, it took only 4 minutes less than 17 hours for Sherpa Babu Chhiri to scale the peak. He achieved this world record during the climbing season in 2000. It was the fastest climb ever recorded. For 34-year-old Chhiri, this is not the only record. His first climb was made when he was only 13; he was then a mere porter attached to a team of foreign-

ers. In 1989 he went alone and since then he has climbed the Everest 10 times. In 1995, he climbed the peak twice within 14 days. In 1999, he was the first to remain on the summit for 21 hours, without bottled oxygen. He muses when he recalls that most Everesters remain there for just enough time to be "clicked" with their feet on the peak! Chhiri is doing all this with a different purpose. He wants to put up a school in his village for sherpa children; he himself had had no opportunity to study in a school.



BORN THIS MONTH

“The India of the past, we can never hope to revive, but the India of the future is for us to shape and to fashion. The India that is to be born will have no room for any distinction of race, creed, or colour... let us be Indians first, and Indians to the last.”

This call was made a hundred years ago by a great social reformer and educationist, Mahadeo Govind Ranade. The last sentence found echo in the speech of every leader who followed him.

Among the social reforms he advocated was women's education. The society of those times was very orthodox. He decided to set an example himself. He began educating his 11-year-old wife who was illiterate. The other women in the household were more angry, when he arranged for an English lady to come home and give lessons to little Ramabai. They saw to it that she took a bath as soon as the lady went away!

Mahadeo was born on January 18, 1842, at Niphad in the district of Nasik. His father Govind Rao Ranade was Administrator in the princely state of Kolhapur.

When he was 13, Mahadeo was sent to Bombay where he joined the

Elphinstone Institution. In due course, he took his M.A., L.L.B, and L.L.B. Honours. In every examination, from his Matriculation, he earned distinctions.

Throughout his academic career, he was a scholarship-holder. In later life, he helped many poor students with money. His attempts to reform society often met with criticism, but he bore it without malice.

He was also of a forgiving nature. When he was holding the post of Presidency Magistrate, he was once travelling by train. A British officer who

got in began throwing out his luggage. Ranade did not take any action. However, he would not spare anyone while doing his duty. Once he punished an Englishman, by sending him to jail for six months for stealing Rs 50. On an earlier occasion, he had imprisoned an Indian for only one month for stealing Rs. 100. When he was criticised of partiality, his reply was, the Englishman had planned the theft, while the Indian was only given

to temptation.

When the congress was formed by A.O.Hume, he joined it unofficially as he was in government service. His support to the objectives of the Congress prompted Mr. Hume to call him his “political guru”. This true son of India passed away on January 16, 1901.



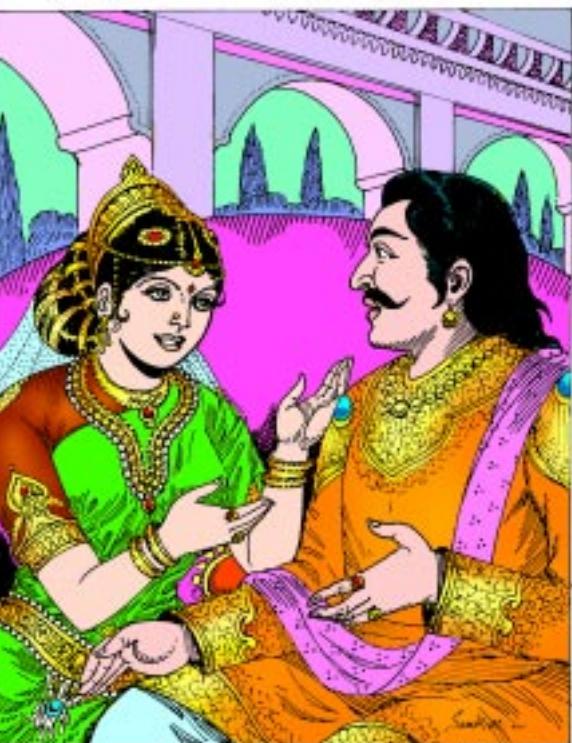


New tales of
King Vikram
and the Vetala!

Conflict of faiths

King Vikramaditya with determination once again climbed the tree, placed the corpse on his shoulders, and set off for the graveyard. The Vetala who possessed the corpse spoke once again: " O King! Your stubbornness makes me fear that you're quite mad. There's a limit to any normal person's patience, but yours seems to have no limit at all. And that I think is quite foolish. I keep trying to explain to you that your life is in danger in this desolate place. There are many wild and ferocious animals that can attack you at any time. Only a fool will wander around

here so freely and fearlessly. You seem to have no intention of going back to your kingdom at all. Maybe you've forgotten that you're a king and have some royal duties to perform. Or, have you come here from your kingdom to escape your problems there? Listen to my advice and go back to your kingdom



and face whatever you have run away from.

“There was a king called Shantanu who also had to face a lot of problems in his kingdom. One day, he thought he had found a neat solution to his problems, but that was only his self-deception. Listen to his story to while

away the time during your long walk.”

The Vetalā then went on to narrate King Shantanu's story.

A long time ago, Shantanu was the King of Vidarbha. He was a good king and the kingdom was prosperous. There was only one problem, the kingdom was beset with disputes and quarrels caused by religion. The devotees of Shiva and those of Vishnu would pick a quarrel on the smallest of issues and create riots or go for a fight on the streets. They would attack each other and damage each other's properties. Shantanu realised that if such a situation was allowed to go on, his enemies would take advantage of the situation and attack Vidarbha. When he sought advice from his ministers, he got contradictory suggestions depending on the group to which the minister belonged. When Shantanu's wife Vivekavati learnt of the problem the king was wrestling with, she asked, “My Lord, do tell me, are you a Shiva devotee or a Vishnu devotee?”

“I'm interested only in the welfare of my state. My subjects are devotees of both Shiva and Vishnu, so I worship and revere both the gods.”

“Well,” said his queen, “our Puranas say that though god is seen in many forms, there is only one god. Our tradition is to see and worship Shiva in Vishnu and Vishnu in Shiva. To establish that Shiva and Vishnu are one, we have

temples for the single form of Harihara. Those temples are lying neglected now. You should promote the worship of Harihara and perhaps people will not then fight about who is greater, Shiva or Vishnu."

King Shantanu smiled slightly and said, "It's not very difficult to tell the people that Shiva and Vishnu are one and that God is one. But some selfish people who want to spread unhappiness and confusion in the land will not let such a message spread among the people. They may even call me an atheist and stir up a revolution in the land. I'll then have to use the army against the people. That would be completely against my principles."

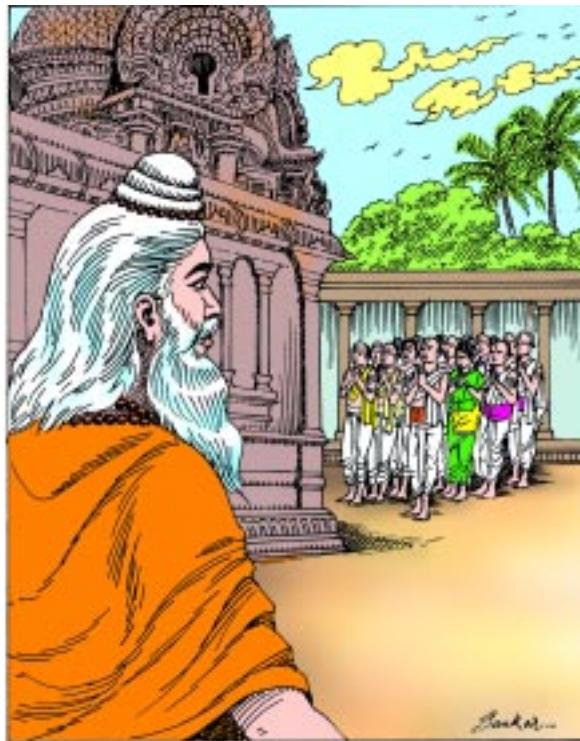
"Don't go to the people as their king, but as a sage or yogi. You can call yourself Hariharnath and preach the oneness of Shiva and Vishnu," suggested Vivekavati.

"When these dissatisfied men are trying to turn the people against their king, can they be held back by a yogi? Then, if the truth be known or if they harm me, will not the whole land be plunged into chaos?" argued the king.

Vivekavati had an answer for that as well. When she was very young, she had waited upon a holy guest with a great deal of care and devotion. Pleased with her, he had given her a magic ring. The queen now brought that ring to the king and said: "I've kept this ring carefully all

these years. The time has now come for its use. Whoever wears this ring will be safe in any kind of danger caused by man or nature. Nor will any weapon hurt him, provided it is worn to help others. Please use it for the good of the people."

The king was very pleased with his wife. He wore the ring and at once



became a yogi wearing a long white beard. Sure that he would not be recognised, the king went out into the kingdom to try preach to the people and show them their shortcomings.

He went around telling everyone that Shiva and Vishnu are one and that they are only different forms of the same god,

and if they worshipped Harihara, they would be worshipping both Shiva and Vishnu. The evil men who were trying to stir up trouble in the land told people not to believe the yogi. In fact, they even got people to throw stones at him and attack him in many ways. But like Prahlada, the yogi remained unharmed, thanks to the magic ring he wore. Unlike Hiranyakashipu, the people slowly started accepting what the yogi said. The attitude of the people changed. They saw the truth in what the yogi was saying and became more tolerant. The selfish and wicked people who had tried to stir up trouble realised that their game was up and went away to try their tricks elsewhere.

The king was very happy with the success of his mission and decided to return to his capital. As he was walking through a deserted place, a young man attacked him viciously. The king was strong enough to hold the youth with one hand. He said: "I'm Hariharnath and have extraordinary powers. I'm a yogi. You knew that and still decided to attack

me. I'm not angry with you, but would like to know why you attacked me."

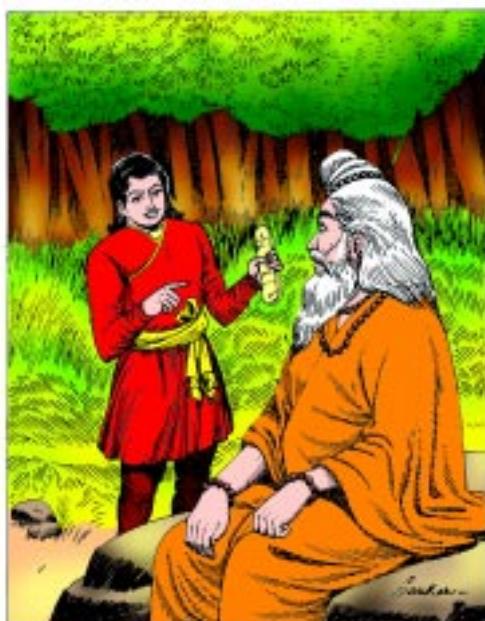
The youth looked at him with hatred and contempt in his eyes and said: "I know who you are and what your aim is. In fact, that is why I attacked you. The root cause of the confusion that prevails in our land is belief and faith in God. For a country to be prosperous,

its people should not have any blind faith. You've sorted out the divisions and fights due to this faith but have not got rid of their faith in God. You have only made it stronger. This is your fault."

Shantanu said: "Most people in this world believe in God. Faith in God is something wonderful. A lot of good work gets

done in this world because of faith. Certainly, sometimes this faith turns blind and people then forget their humility. They become uncivilised and dangerous. At such times it is necessary for someone to lead them back to the correct path. That is why I have been preaching the oneness of God."

The young man then read out a poem he had written. Shantanu was





Sankar...

impressed. He told the young man: "You've written a very good poem. It is a good piece of literature. If you read it out to the king he'll be pleased and will reward you." The king then returned to his capital.

One day he was holding court, when the youth entered. He took the king's permission and read out a poem. When he had finished, the whole court rang out with applause and praise. Everyone remarked it was a brilliant poem. Looking very pleased, the king said: "Son, you've written a truly magnificent poem. It is worth ten thousand gold coins."

But before the king could do or say anything more, one of the ministers whispered. "Your Majesty, this poem may be brilliant but it speaks against God and faith in Him. Most of our people

are believers in God and they will be hurt and upset by such ideas, and so I think the poet should not be rewarded by the state."

Shantanu nodded in agreement and asked the young poet to meet him privately.

When they met, the king said: "Without doubt your poem is very good, even brilliant. If you want to spread your ideas and beliefs through your poems, I can give you powers to do that. But that power should only be used for the good of the people."

The youth refused the king's offer. "Everyone cannot be a yogi. I want to be able to write great works. That is where my talent lies. If I'm appreciated in this kingdom and by the king, I'll continue to write. Otherwise I may do



some other kind of work.”

Shantanu then gave him a beautiful painting and said: “Take this painting to the jeweller Ratnakar. He’ll give you ten thousand gold coins for it. You can then write more poems and bring them to me. By that time, I would have painted more pictures. But please do not tell Ratnakar where you got the painting from or who the artist is.”

The youth was very surprised. “Your Majesty,” he asked, “why should you sell your painting to give me a reward? Is the treasury empty? Or is it that you do not honour poets and artists in this land?”

Shantanu laughed and said: “No, that’s not true. The king is not the kingdom. He has to rule according to

the wishes of the people. Your poem has not found favour with the public, so I cannot reward you with public money. However, I personally appreciate your poem. That is why I would like to reward you with the money I might earn personally through my art. Take this painting to Ratnakar, for he is an art lover and will give the true value for it. But please do not reveal my name. If he knows I am the artist, he will inflate the value of the painting but I would like it to go for its real price.”

The youth folded his hands and said: “Your Majesty, I didn’t ever imagine that there could be a king like you. I’m an atheist, but I can see god in you. I will not look for any honour in future. You’re my ideal now and I shall earn my own livelihood.”

The king put his arm around his shoulders and said: “Poets like you are needed to ensure that the people are not swayed by foolish ideas or emotions. If we’re not able to honour poets like you, then where will people like me get the inspiration to paint pictures? Any artistic talent must have a chance to bloom. My painting can encourage your writing and if you can see God in me, then your poems will do good in the world. Take this painting to Ratnakar. Even if he were to insist, please do not reveal the name of the artist to him.”

The youth humbly said: “Your

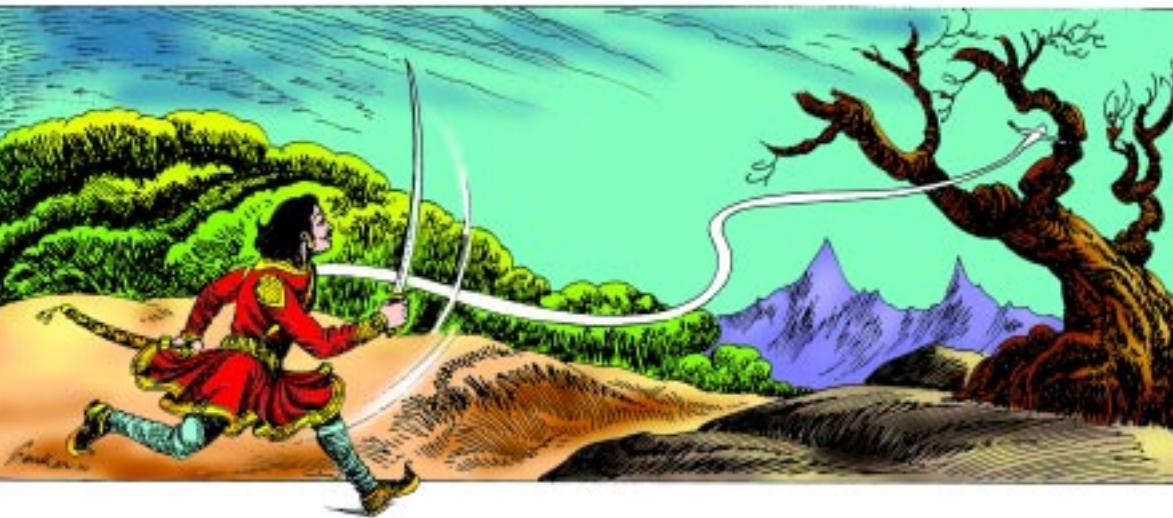
Majesty, you were not able to honour me in the open court, but I consider this honour even greater. I'll follow your advice faithfully all my life and I'm sure I'll be able to receive an honour in public from you some day."

The Vetala finished the story and then asked the king: "Administering a kingdom is like walking on a tightrope. A nation is made of all kinds of people with all kinds of beliefs, and naturally they fight with each other. It is important for a king to deal with such things firmly so that they don't get out of hand. People who talk sweetly into obedience is a very short-term solution if that's possible at all. Don't you think Shantanu was basking in false confidence when he felt he had solved the problem of religious fights in the kingdom? Wasn't his belief self-

deception? If you know the answers to my questions and yet decide to keep quiet, your head will explode into smithereens."

King Vikram said: "Human society is always changing. As soon as one problem is solved, another will come up. A wise king will try and sort out the differences among his subjects by persuasion or discussion. This is what Shantanu did. You can't punish people for having different ideas or disagreeing with their ideas. The king has to keep a watch and not allow the situation to get out of hand. There are no permanent solutions to such problems."

As soon as the king broke his silence, the Vetala with the corpse flew back to the ancient tree. And Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the Vetala.

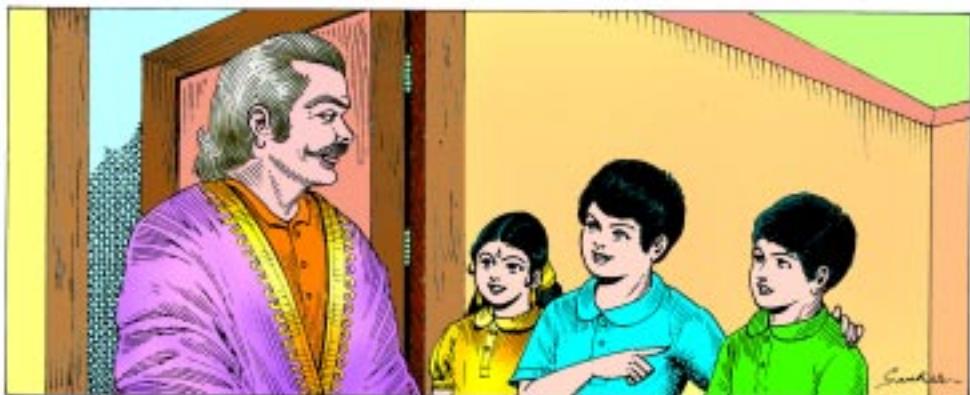


Saga of India

Glimpses of a great civilisation – its glorious quest for Truth through the ages



12. LOFTIEST OF ALL POSITIONS



It was a cool December Sunday morning and Professor Devnath had come out to the drawing room, clad in a shawl, when Sandip and Chameli returned from their neighbour's house with a beaming face.

"Grandpa, meet the latest member of your audience. He lives in Shimla and is on a visit to his maternal uncle to escape the terrible Himalaya winter," said Sandip. "He's Dhruv."

"What a significant name! To bear such a name is at once a joy and a responsibility," observed the Professor.

"You say responsibility, Grandpa? What do you mean?"

"You know the story of Dhruv, don't

you?"

"Well, no, I must admit. If I knew it, I don't remember it," said Sandip, rather apologetically.

"But I know, it, Grandpa," claimed Chameli.

"And what about you, Dhruv?" The professor's attention went over to the newcomer.

"I know to some extent, sir. He was a prince. Insulted by his stepmother, he went away to the forest and meditated on god and became the Pole Star."

"Good. What does the story signify?" asked Professor Devnath.

The two boys and Chameli ex-

changed glances and the girl whispered to her brother mischievously.

"I know it, but I don't know its significance. Even Dhruv seems to be familiar with only the story!"

"Even so I would like to hear it from you, sir," Dhruv said with humility.

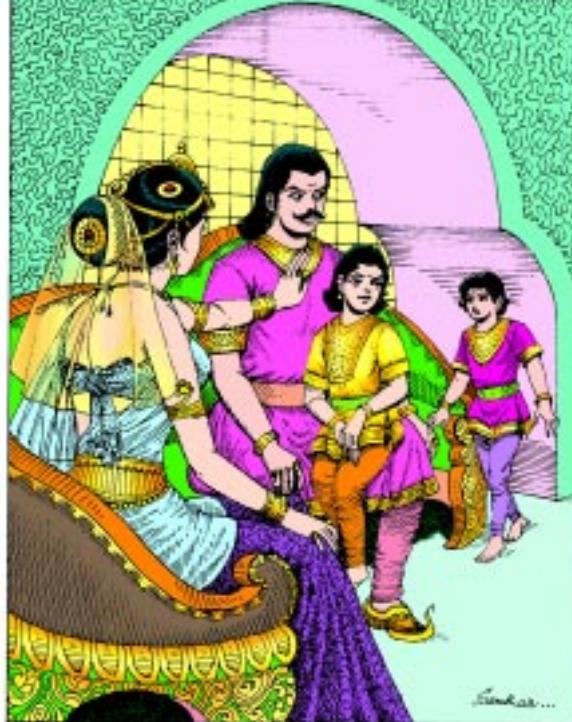
"Grandpa, you've to narrate the story in order to drive home its significance!" That was Sandip's demand.

Devnath had to oblige the young seekers. At first he narrated the bare story:

King Uttanapada had two wives, Suniti and Suruchi. While Queen Suniti's son bore the name Dhruv, Queen Suruchi's son was called Uttam. Suruchi exercised a greater influence on the king, while Suniti was shy and humble.

One day, while the king was talking to Suruchi, the two little princes were playing nearby. Suddenly Uttam had an inspiration to break away and climb on to the king's lap. Instinctively, Dhruv followed him and tried to do the same. The king would have taken both of them into his embrace, but Suruchi shouted, directing her wrath at Dhruv. "No!"

Surprised, the little prince stopped. Her stern gaze fixed on the boy, the Queen Suruchi said: "It is audacious of you to share what is due to my son, Uttam. To deserve to sit on the king's lap, you ought to have been born of me, not of anybody else!"



Dhruv felt in these unkind words a shower of whiplashes. Casting a remorseful look at the king and the queen, he ran away to his mother. Suniti took the boy into her lap. As Dhruv narrated to her his humiliating experience tearfully, she too wept. "My son, what is really of value is not the favour of a father or a king, but the grace of the Lord; the only seat that is safe is the lap of the Lord. Once you are there, you would miss nothing. Nothing can be compared to the glory and delight of the Lord's love and compassion."

Dhruv heard his mother with rapt attention. He wiped his tears and stood up: "I must find the Lord's love. I must achieve that lofty position from which no power can ever topple me."

He prepared to enter the forest for meditating on the Lord. Suniti certainly did not expect her son to take such an extreme step. She tried her best to dissuade him, but Dhruv was adamant.

Indeed, unshakable was Dhruv's faith in the Divine's grace, great was his aspiration, and deep his concentration. Neither the terrible beasts wandering around him could scare him nor the vagaries of nature. At last, Lord Vishnu appeared before him and promised him the boon that he would, when his life on earth ended, become a luminous star and dwell in the sky forever.

"So, we identify the star closest to the North Pole, in the northern hemisphere, as Dhruv, the great devotee eternally in union with God. By the way, do you know what happened to Dhruv after he realized the goal of his meditation?" the professor asked all the three, but Dhruv in particular.

"He became the Pole Star!" answered Dhruv.



"Not so. He was advised by the Lord to return to his father's palace and take charge of the kingdom. He did so. By then King Uttanapada had decided to retire from his kingly duties and devote himself to prayers and meditation in the forest. Dhruv ascended the throne to the great happiness of everybody. He proved to be the most ideal king. One day, when his brother Uttam was killed by a Yaksha, a supernatural being, Dhruv invaded the domain of those beings and single-handedly fought the tribe and vanquished them. Kubera, the monarch over the Yakshas, was deeply impressed by him and made a truce with him, and

bestowed boons on him. What does this show?" asked the professor.

The children were not sure. So the professor answered his own question: "It shows that one who realizes God does not necessarily look upon the affairs of this earth as funny. Dhruv performed his duty as a king even after realizing god. The legend asserts that

the greatest thing in life is to know God. Everybody can disappoint a man as King Uttanapada disappointed Dhruv—but God never disappoints a person if he or she turns to Him entirely.

Sandip asked: “Did Dhruv become the Pole Star after his death?”

“That, I believe, is symbolic. The Pole Star symbolizes steadiness and loftiness. It shows the qualities one can achieve when one turns to God, instead of being enamoured of the puny human positions and fighting for them with envy and passion.”

“Thank you, sir, for explaining the significance of the legend. Now I understand what a great responsibility it is for me, when I bear that name,” said Dhruv.

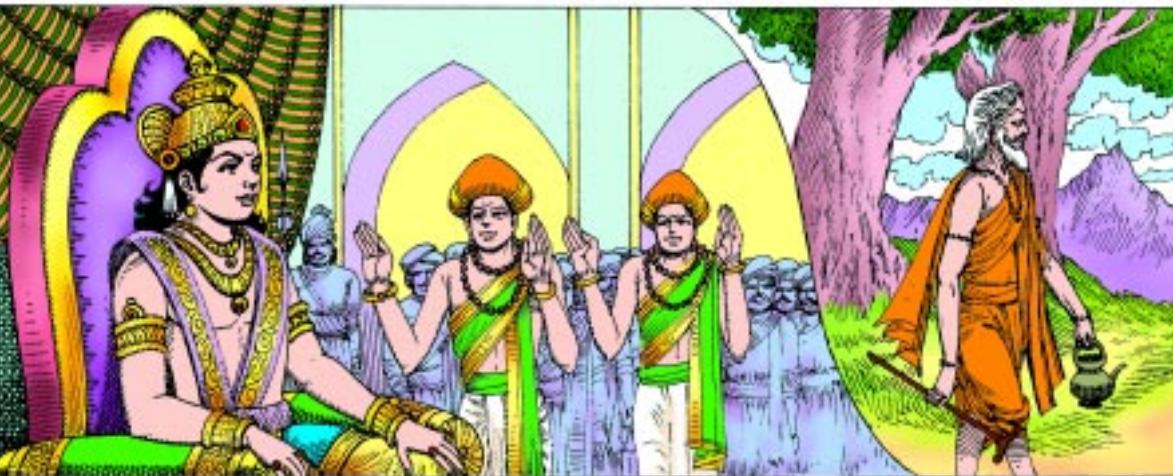
“I’m happy that you got the point. The story of Dhruv belongs to the earliest phase of Indian mythology. It imparts

to us this truth that all human relationships are subject to change, whereas our relationship with the Lord alone is eternal. Though Dhruv went to the forest, partly out of a sense of disgust for his life in the palace and partly to meditate in solitude, the ancient Indian wisdom was convinced that the Divine was everywhere. That is the truth the story of yet another prince tells us. Can you guess who I’ve in mind?” asked Grandpa.

“Isn’t it Prahlad?” said Sandip.

“Right. He proved that the Divine was everywhere even in something as gross as the pillar. The demon-king Hiranyakashipu’s violent denial of the truth resulted in a violent assertion of the truth, through the appearance of Narasimha,” said the professor, and he found out that the story of Prahlad was already known to the children.

—Visvavasu
(To continue)

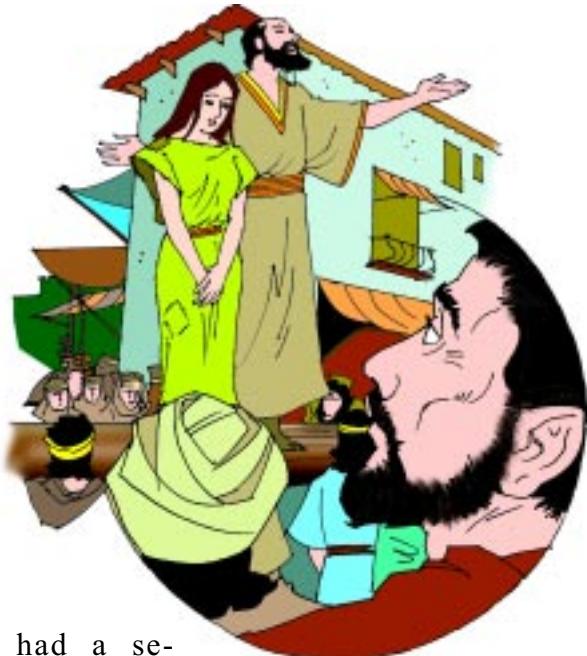


A Bride for the Pharaoh

[The events that took place in this story happened more than 2,000 years ago, during the reign of Pharaoh Amasis in the great country of Egypt. Many versions of this story are now told in different parts of the world.]

At the time of this story, Naucrais was a prosperous trading town at the mouth of the Nile. Many Greek traders had made their home there. One such trader was called Charaxos. He traded for many years with Egypt and when he had made a lot of money, he decided to settle down at Naucrais. Those days many people were bought and sold as slaves by rich people who could afford them. Charaxos could afford many slaves. At a slave market he once saw a beautiful girl whose master was keen to sell her to the highest bidder. Charaxos felt strangely moved by the girl and bought her. He took her home, not to be made a slave but as the daughter he did not have.

Charaxos grew to love the girl, who was called Rhodophis, and looked after her very well. She had pretty clothes to wear and jewels brought in from all over the world. He built a lovely house for her to live in and filled it with all the luxuries then known to man. This house



had a secluded garden filled with all kinds of fruit trees and sweet-smelling plants. There was a marble-lined pool in the garden where Rhodophis could cool off on a summer's day. He also gave her a very pretty pair of rose red slippers for her small delicate feet. They were exquisitely made and, of all the things Charaxos gave her, Rhodophis loved that pair of slippers the best.

Rhodophis also loved the old man who was so kind to her. She talked with him and sang for him and told him tales of her life before she came to his house. At the previous owner's place, a rather ugly man called Aesops had been very kind to her and told her many wonderful tales of animals and birds. Rhodophis entertained Charaxos with those stories and they thus passed many pleasant hours.

One day, something happened that was to change the calm flow of their

lives. Rhodophis went to the river with her companions. There they decided to take a swim in the cool blue waters of the Nile. They took off their clothes and left them in a heap on the bank. Rhodophis also took off her favourite rose-red slippers and left them near the clothes where they glowed as though they were made of rubies. As the girls were frolicking in the water, an eagle swooped down and took away one of the rose-red slippers. The girls could not do anything from the water and Rhodophis was inconsolable. She wept and cried that she would not be able to wear those lovely slippers again. Besides, she was very sad to lose something that Charaxos had given her.

The eagle, in the meantime, seemed to have a purpose in stealing that slipper. Maybe it was sent by the Egyptian god Horus himself, for it flew straight as an arrow to the palace of the Pharaoh at Memphis and dropped the slipper into the courtyard where the Pharaoh sat. The people who were with him screamed in fright. Pharaoh Amasis, too, was a bit shaken. Then someone picked up the slipper and handed it to him. He looked at it in wonder, for it was indeed beautifully made and exquisitely decorated. He had a great desire to see the girl for whose foot it was made. He felt that the girl must indeed be lovely. He announced that he would make the girl his bride

whose foot fitted the slipper and who could produce the other of the pair.

"Let my messengers go forth to all the corners of my kingdom and look for this girl, for indeed the gods have decreed that she must be my bride," he declared.

The messengers bowed to him and vowed not to come back until they had done as the Pharaoh asked. They then crawled backwards out of the room (for no one was allowed to turn his back to the Pharaoh) and set off to do the Pharaoh's bidding.



From Memphis they set off towards the mouth of the Nile asking if anyone knew of a girl who had tiny feet and had lost a rose-red slipper. They met with no success till they came to a town near the mouth of the Nile.

Here they heard of the rich Greek trader Charaxos and his adopted daughter Rhodophis. They heard of her beauty and his love for her. They went to the great mansion on the Nile and found



Rhodophis in the garden still feeling a little sad about the loss of her slipper. When they showed her the slipper, she jumped up for joy and put it on to show how well it fitted her. Then she asked her companion to fetch its pair. The Pharaoh's messengers were now convinced that they had found the girl the Pharaoh was seeking.

They told Rhodophis : "We've come all the way from Memphis, for our great god and king, Pharaoh Amasis, bids you to come to his palace there. He would make you his bride, for he believes the god Horus had sent his eagle to him with the slipper for this very purpose."

Such a command could not be ignored or disobeyed. Rhodophis was sad that she would have to leave Charaxos in his old age and yet she was excited at what awaited her at Memphis. She took leave of Charaxos and went with the messengers to Memphis. When Pharaoh Amasis saw her, he was sure that Horus had sent her to him. He married Rhodophis at a grand ceremony and they lived happily ever afterwards for many years.



Garuda

the Invincible

ART: PAANI

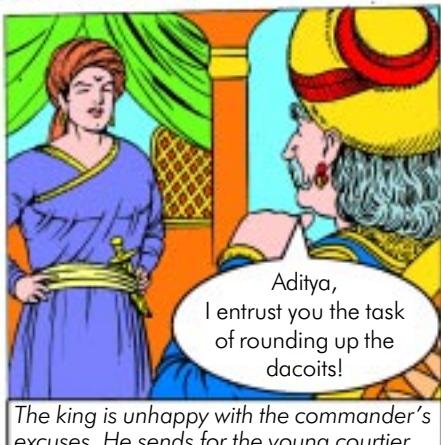
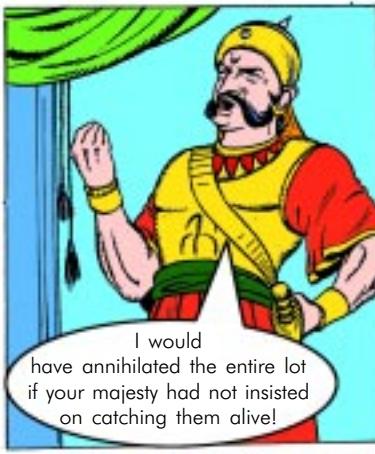
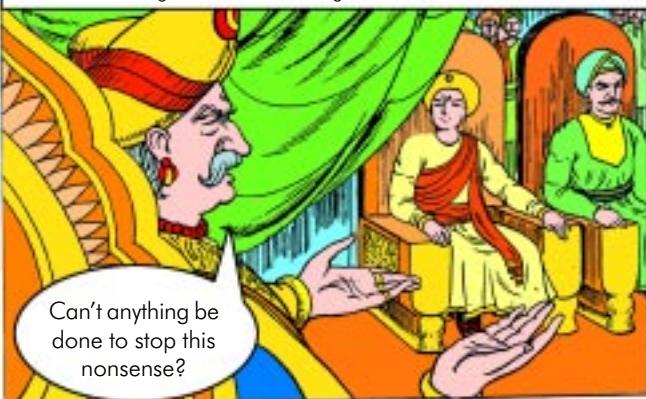
Chandrapuri, ruled by Mahendradeva of a moon dynasty, enjoys peace and tranquility for a long time. The king is childless. The queen's brother Narendradeva, the army commander, has a son, Ravindradeva, who has every chance to succeed to the throne. Narendradeva is inefficient.

The sudden death of the able minister gives a shock to the king, who sends for his son Aditya, undergoing training in martial arts.

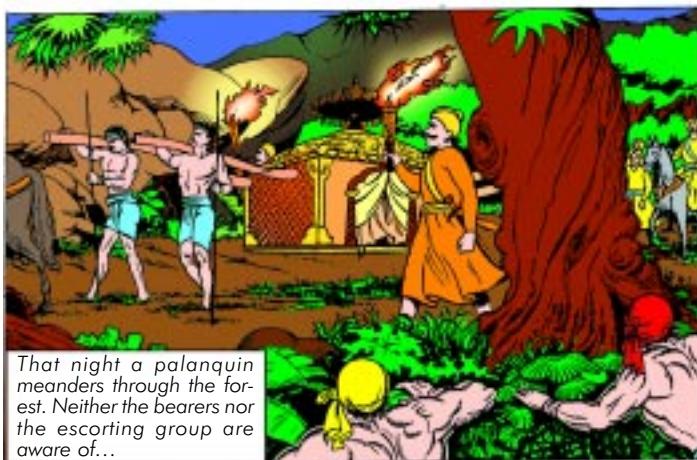
He is made
a courtier.



Of late, the king is full of anguish in the wake of ever-increasing reports of dacoities. He gives vent to his anger in the court.



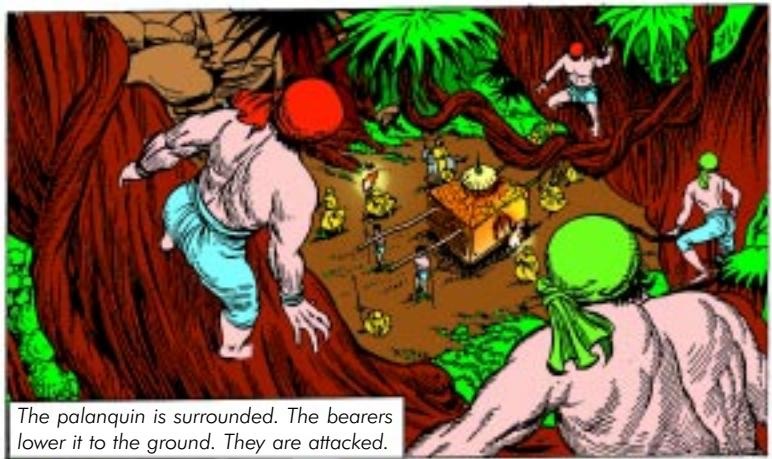
The king is unhappy with the commander's excuses. He sends for the young courtier.



...anyone watching the procession from a hilltop a little distance away.

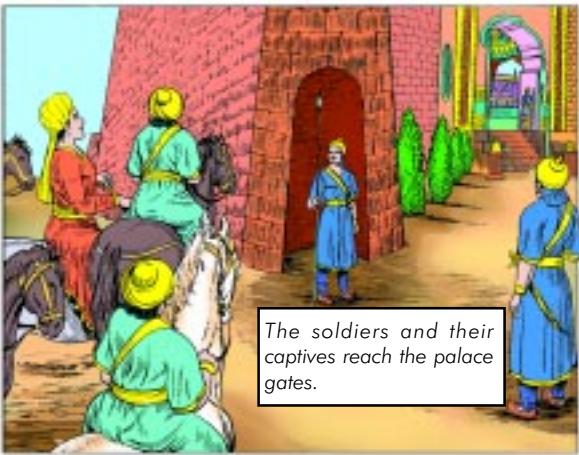


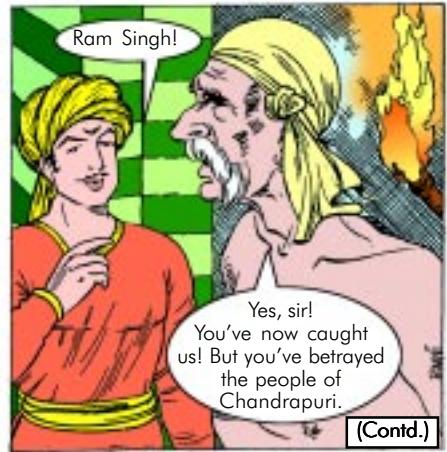
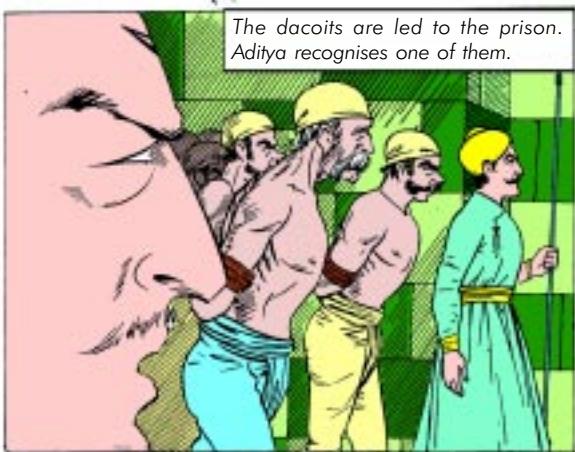
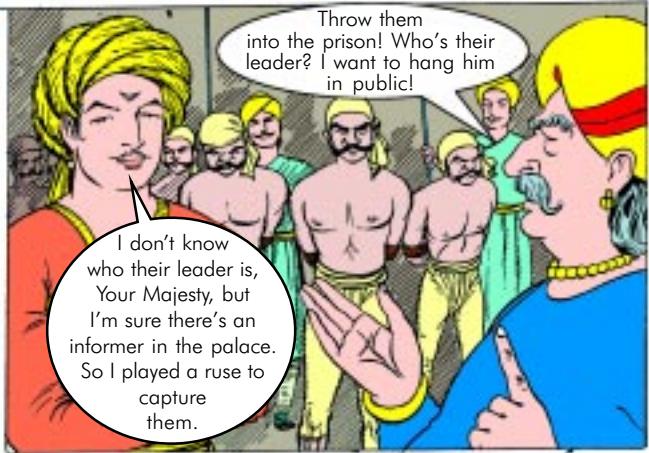
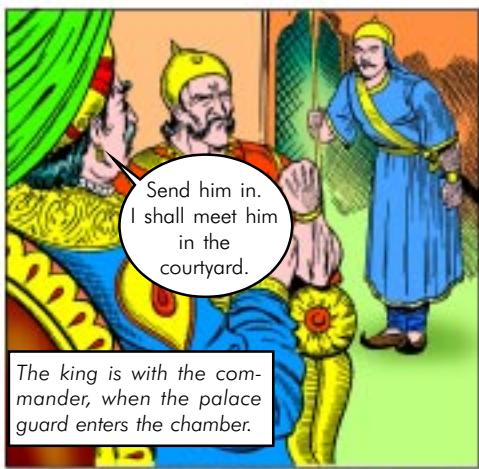
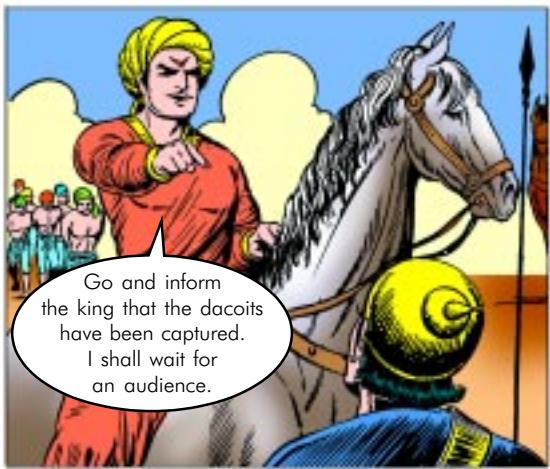
Suddenly...





The dacoits are outnumbered. Soon they are caught, tied to each other, and led by the soldiers. They proceed to the palace.





India in the 20th century

MARCH TOWARDS FREEDOM - 1901-1921

Not long ago, this magazine commemorated the Golden Jubilee of India's Independence by bringing to you the exciting story of the fight led by Lakshmi Bai, the Rani of Jhansi, and others. "The Saga of 1857" told you how they sacrificed their lives for the sake of their motherland. For the next quarter of a century, there was no organised movement to channelise the people's aspirations.

By a strange quirk of events, it fell to the task of A.O.Hume, a former official with the British government, to sow the seeds of an organisation where the people could discuss and decide how their future would be. Thus was born in 1885 the Indian National Congress which took up the cause of Indian nationalism. Indian thought was guided by leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Lala Lajpat Rai, and Bipin Chandra Pal.



Spread of Indian nationalism

The advent of the 20th century saw India struck by famine. One-fourth of the population was affected. A commission was appointed to study irrigation possibilities to extend the area of cultivation. A committee was also formed to start agricultural banks.

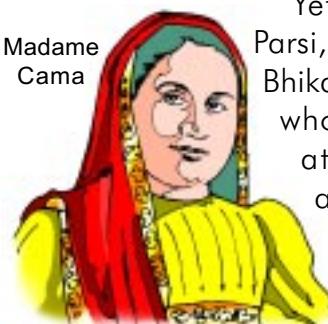
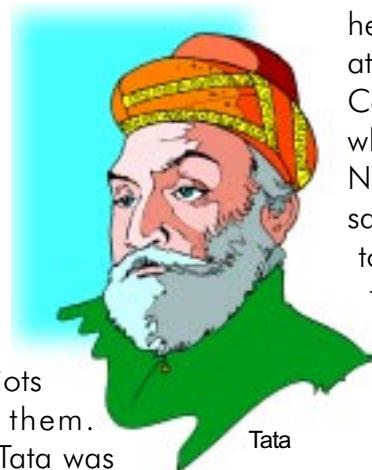
Though administrative reforms remained a far cry for Indians, the rulers of Indian States went ahead with social reforms. For example, the Gaikwad of Baroda introduced the Child Marriage Prevention Act, raising the age at marriage for boys to 16 and girls to 12.

Parsis, who had fled from Persia in the 8th century and made India their new home, had merged with the ambitions and hopes of the people. There were many patriots among them. Jamshedji Tata was

a man of vision. His aim was to see an industrialised India. He established the first steel mill in Sakchi, in Bihar in 1901. Six years later, it was formally named the Tata Iron & Steel Mill and the place came to be known, very appropriately, as Jamshed-pur.

Yet another Parsi, Madame Bhikaji Cama, who used to attend the annual sessions of the Congress, in 1902 embarked on a world tour to spread the message of Indian nationalism. Her tour took her to Stuttgart in Germany, where at the Second International Socialist Congress, she unfurled the tricolour which was later to become India's National Flag. Among those who saluted the flag was Lenin, who was to become one of the leaders of the Russian Revolution. Madame Cama was hailed as the Mother of Indian Revolution.

In England, Edward VII ascended the throne in 1901. One

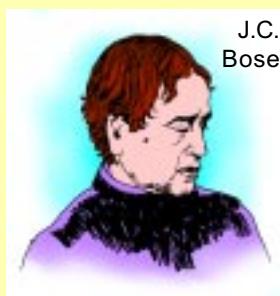


Elsewhere in the world ...

of the first journeys he undertook was to India in 1903 where, in Delhi, he was crowned Emperor of India. He announced a remission of interest on loans given to famine-affected provinces.

The Imperial Agricultural Research Institute was established in village Pusa, in Bihar (now known as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, located in New Delhi).

- Rabindranath Tagore established 'Shantiniketan' in Bolpur, 130 km north of Calcutta.
- The Indian botanist Jagdish Chandra Bose, in his address to the Royal Society in London, for the first time revealed that



J.C.
Bose

plants too have life, they experience feelings, and go through emotions.



- The Wright Brothers took to the skies in their Kitty Hawk – the plane they assembled in North Carolina, USA.



- Henry Ford, son of a farmer, established the first car manufacturing factory in Detroit, USA, marking the start of an industrial revolution in that country.

Strong anti-British feelings

An Industrial Exhibition became a feature of the annual sessions of the Congress, first in Ahmedabad (1902) and then Madras (1903).

The Indian Co-operative Act came into force in 1904, with a view to encouraging people engaged in such spheres of activity, like agriculture, industry, and banking, to form co-operatives.

Travancore became the first Indian State to make primary education free for all classes of children.

The year 1905 saw the partition of Bengal into East Bengal (including Assam—with capital at Dacca) and West Bengal (including Bihar and parts of Orissa—with capital at Calcutta). The government explained that it was done for administrative convenience, but the people thought it was to keep the predominantly Muslim-populated

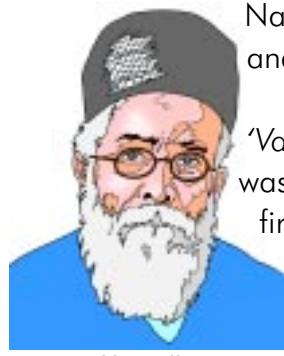
areas away from the centre of government in the capital city of Calcutta.



Naturally there was great resentment among the people, giving rise to stronger anti-British feelings. There was widespread *hartal* and boycott of British goods.

Bengal was now in the forefront of the freedom struggle.

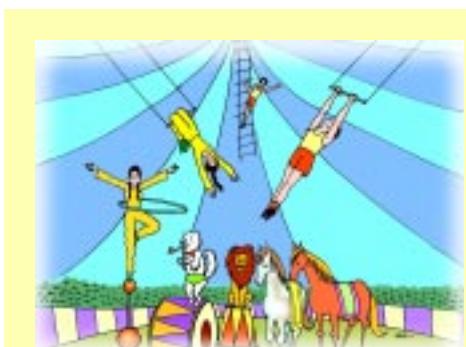
The government gave greater importance to agriculture by starting agricultural colleges in Poona, Nagpur, Kanpur, and Coimbatore.



Naoroji

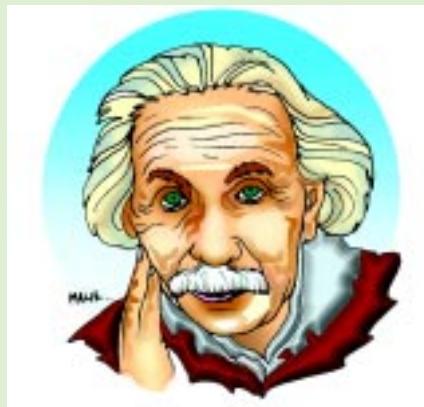
The song 'Vande Mataram' was sung for the first time at the 22nd session of the Congress at Calcutta in 1906. Dadabhai Naoroji was the

President. M.A. Jinnah attended the session as a member. Aurobindo Ghose started an English newspaper, calling it Aurobindo Ghose 'Bande Mataram', with the main aim of carrying on the fight against British rule.

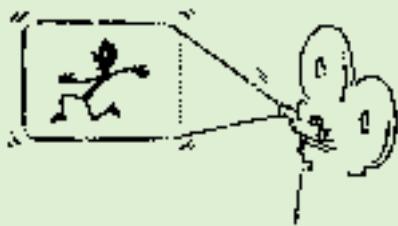


- India's first circus company – Malabar Grand Circus – was founded by Keeleri Kunhikannan.
- Manek D. Sethna started the first touring cinema, showing '*The Life of Christ*'.

Elsewhere in the world ...



- Einstein announced the Theory of Relativity.



- The first animated cartoon film was made by John Stewart Blackton.

Moderates versus radicals

There was a split in the Congress in 1907 at its Surat session, when some of the *radicals* advo-

complicity of some of the radicals in the Alipore Bomb Case of 1908. Aurobindo Ghose was arrested and imprisoned. This was a turning point in his life. He declared that 'karma' is better than fighting which should have a spiritual foundation to suc-

cated strong action to oust the foreign rulers from the country, while the moderates wanted India to remain in the British empire, but with equal rights. The radicals held a meeting at the same venue, presided over by Aurobindo Ghose. Support came from Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal. The moderates held a separate meeting, led by Dr. Rash Behari Bose, Surendranath Bannerji and Gokhale. The radicals returned to the Congress fold in 1916.

The government alleged

cess. On his release next year, he left active politics.

Bombay witnessed the first ever labour strike in the country when, to protest the arrest of Tilak, some 100,000 workers struck work for six days. They clashed with the police and the army.

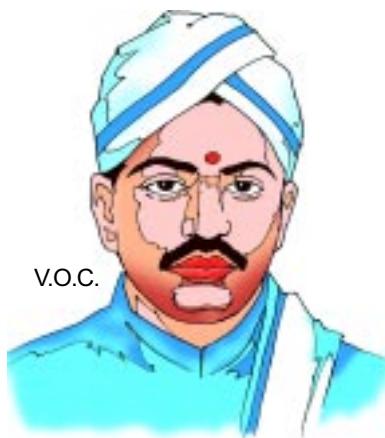
The long-awaited administrative



Elsewhere in the world ...



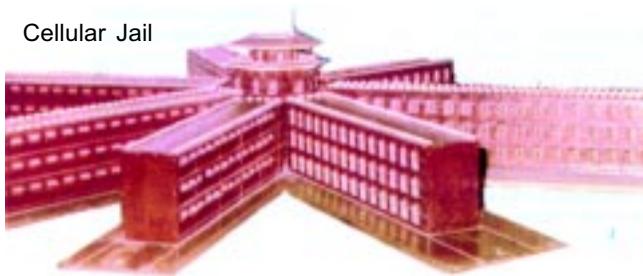
- The Boy Scout organisation was launched by Lord Baden-Powell.
- A rally of 200,000 women in London demanded voting rights.



Call for Hindu Muslim Unity

Ten persons convicted in the Alipore Bomb Case were, for the first time, deported to the Andamans, where they were imprisoned for life in the cellular jail. Till it

Cellular Jail



was closed down in 1938, the jail received 500 convicts in all.

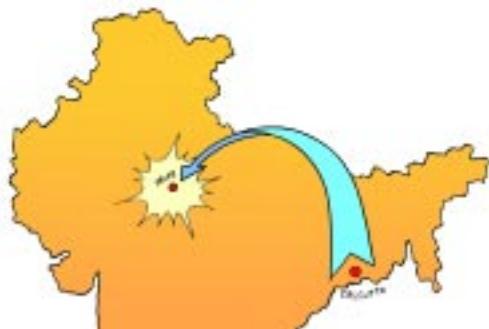
Madanlal Dhingra, who was in England for higher studies, was executed for shooting down an English official. The National Indian Association condemned Dhingra's act. The lone voice against the resolution was heard from V.D.Savarkar.

The Allahabad session of the Congress in 1910 was once again presided over by an Englishman — Sir William Wedder Barron. The Congress had as members Indians educated in England, besides Englishmen. An Englishman was, therefore, chosen as President to avoid a wedge being created among the members and to sink all differences between Hindus and Mus-

lims, and between moderates and radicals. The session expressed satisfaction over the government's measures for the welfare of Indians and demanded repeal of the Act partitioning Bengal.

The demand for the repeal of the Bengal Partition Act was conceded by the government. This was announced at the Delhi Durbar held in 1911

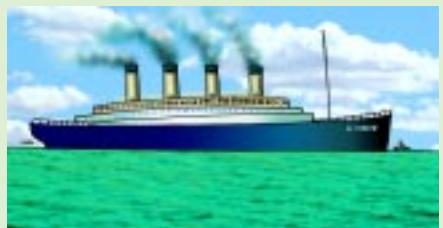
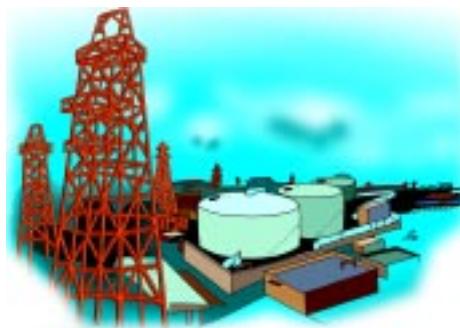
to welcome the visiting King George V. He also announced the shifting of the country's capital from Calcutta to Delhi.



The two Bengals were merged in 1912, and the state remained one single unit till 1947 when East Bengal became a part of Pakistan and was called East Pakistan. It became a separate nation (Bangladesh) in 1972.

Elsewhere in the world ...

- The beginning of the plastic age was marked with the manufacture of artificial plastic or bakelite as discovered by Leo Bakeland of Belgium. This product was also turned into pyrex, cellophane, safety glass, polyester, teflon and nylon.
- Lord Baden-Powell's sister, Agnes, launched the Girl Guide movement.
- S.S. *Titanic*, the luxury liner described as a 'floating palace', sank on its maiden voyage from Southampton in England to New York on April 14,



- Formation of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company was announced following successful oil prospecting in that country. This opened up employment opportunities for Indians in Persia (now called Iran).

when it was hit by an iceberg. Of the 2,224 passengers and crew, as many as 1,513 drowned.

Armed resistance advocated

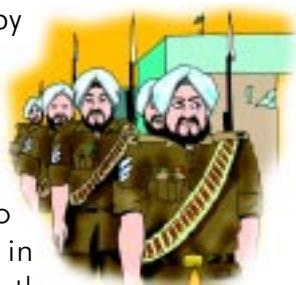
Farmers and factory workers in Punjab were greatly influenced by the activities of the Gaddar Party of Punjabi workers in the USA led by Lala Hardayal. The Party believed in armed resistance as the only way to secure freedom for the country. There was resentment among the Punjabi soldiers in the army towards their English officers.

The people's pride felt a sudden surge when Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the 1913 Nobel Prize for Literature for his '*Gitanjali*'.

The Komagatha Maru incident further stoked anti-British feelings among the Punjabis. Nearly 600

Sikhs went by ship in 1914 to Canada where they were refused permission to land. Back in Calcutta, the government wanted them to proceed to Punjab and not stay back in Calcutta apprehending an agitation. There was firing and many were killed; many others were imprisoned.

On the outbreak of the Great War, the Indian soldiers in the British army took part in battles in the western front. The German warship *Emden* shelled Madras harbour.



Elsewhere in the world ...



- Gandhiji was arrested for the first time in South Africa, for defying the order restricting the movement of Indians from one province to another. Earlier he had led 2,500 Indians from Natal to Transvaal. They were taken into custody and sent back to Natal. Gandhiji was sentenced to a 9-month prison term.

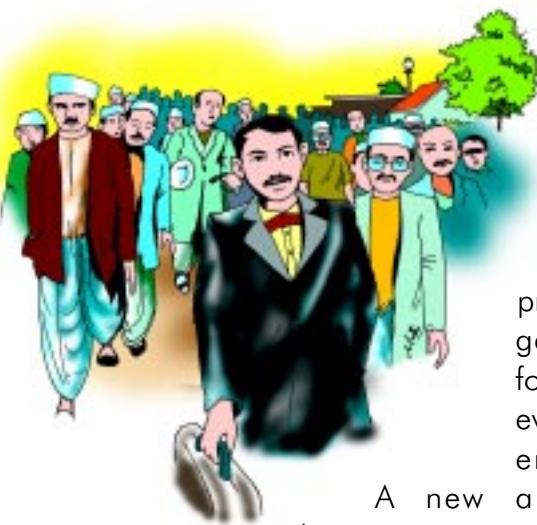
- Tarzan in comics started appearing in 1914.



- On July 27, 1914, broke out what came to be called World War I. Crown Prince Archduke Ferdinand of Austria and his wife were assassinated at Sarajevo on June 28. Austria asked Serbia to put a halt to all anti Austria-Hungary activities. Serbia rejected the Austrian ultimatum on July 23. Austria declared war on Serbia on July 25. Russia, Britain, France and their friends formed the group called Allies. The Axis powers were led by Austria-Hungary and Germany, and joined by Italy, Greece, Romania, Portugal, Belgium, Netherlands, and Japan. The War was mostly fought on the western and eastern sides of Germany and Austria.
- The first ships passed through the Panama Canal that divides the continents of North America and South America.
- A new technique of construction came into popularity, when the first ever skyscraper — the Woolworth Building — was opened in New York.



A Bharat govt. on foreign soil



A new dimension was added to the nationalist movement with Gandhiji's return to India in 1915. He declared that he would follow Gokhale's path. Gandhiji and the students of his Phoenix Ashram in South Africa called on Tagore at Shantiniketan.

Tagore was conferred with the knighthood.

Raja Mahendra Pratap and Barkatullah announced the establishment of a Swatantra Bharat Government in Kabul.

Dr. Annie Besant, President of the Theosophical Society, launched the Home Rule movement in Poona in 1916. Her aim was to organise the

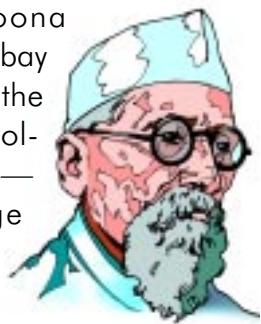
political aspirations of Indians and to convey to the British Parliament the need to grant Home Rule to India. The Home Rule League was formed. Optimists among the leaders like Gokhale and Dr. Annie Besant did not approve of a separate organization to fight for freedom. However, there was general enthusiasm among the people, especially after leaders like Tilak joined the League.



Dr. Annie Besant

Educational prospects for women got a fillip when Prof. Karve established the first Women's University in Poona (shifted to Bombay in 1936) and the first medical college for women — Lady Hardinge College — was started in Delhi.

The 32nd session of the



Prof. Karve

Elsewhere in the world ...



- Battles raged both on land and at sea in 1915. When the Allies had victories in the western sector, Russia was made to retreat in the eastern front. The British passenger ship *Lusitania* was hit by a German U-boat and sank with 1,200 people, including 126 Americans. There was great pressure on the USA to join the War, but President Woodrow Wilson continued his policy of neutrality. Germany used teargas as a weapon for the first time.

- The labour class became rulers for the first time in the world when the October Revolution of 1917 resulted in the formation of a Communist government in Russia, ending the 300-year Czarist rule. Led by Leon Trotsky and



Trotsky

Vladimir Lenin, factory workers, farmers, soldiers, and navy personnel joined the Revolution.

Congress at Calcutta in 1917 had a woman President for the first time — Dr. Annie Besant. It signalled the approval of the Home Rule movement started by her.

The Montague-Chelmsford Reforms included transfer of power to a responsible government in stages. The arrest of Gandhiji, from Indian soil for the first time, had a great impact on the nationalist movement. The action came about when he was leading a Satyagraha in Champaran, Bihar. Farmers working in British estates as contract labour joined the movement.

The Khilafat movement started by the Ali brothers — Mahomed and Shaukat — was aimed at the British government against its attempts to divide Turkey after the World War in 1918. But it had its impact in India, too, for its anti-British stand. The brothers earned the respect of the Indian leaders.

The first trade union was formed in Madras by B.P.Wadia. Led by Gandhiji, the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Union soon followed.

Non-cooperation with government

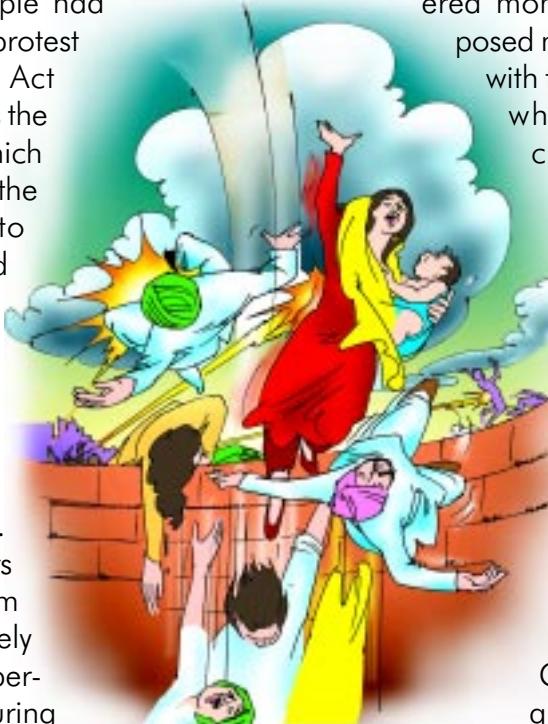
Anti-British feelings rose to a crescendo after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919. Some 25,000 people had gathered to protest the Rowlatt Act (described as the Black Act) which empowered the authorities to arrest and punish without trial anybody who was charged with an act of treason. Army soldiers fired at them indiscriminately killing 380 persons and injuring another 1,200. The agitation in Punjab assumed strong overtones. Jallianwala Bagh was thus a milestone in the country's fight for freedom. There was strong reaction in the British Parliament where the members of the Liberal Party expressed shock over the incident. Protest meetings were held all over India to condemn the reprehensible act of the government. Rabindranath

Tagore returned his knighthood in protest.

The Khilafat movement gathered momentum. It proposed non-cooperation with the government, which was accepted by the 1920 Calcutta session of the Congress, as the new strategy to gain freedom. The demand for Swaraj was reiterated at the Nagpur Congress the same year. Gandhiji was requested to lead

the non-cooperation movement.

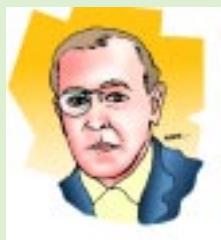
The All India College Students Conference at Nagpur, with Lala Lajpat Rai as president, decided to form an organisation of students. The Butler Committee report recognised the independence of the princely states, which could henceforth attend all government meetings as independent nations.



Elsewhere in the world ...



- Following combined resistance by Britain, the USA, France, Canada, and Australia, Germany was forced to retreat and then to surrender and sign the Treaty of Paris. With the withdrawal of Russia from the War, after losing several areas, World War I practically came to an end.
- Britain granted voting rights to women and reduced the voting age for males to 21.
- World War I officially came to an end with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1918.
- The first meeting of the League of Nations was held in Paris. President Woodrow Wilson of the USA chaired the session.
- The first official meeting of the League of Nations was held in Geneva on November 19 with 27 members. President Woodrow Wilson's "14 Principles" were accepted. The last one stated that differences between two nations should be talked out to avoid another war.



Students to join freedom struggle

January 12, 1921 was a landmark day in India's freedom struggle. The first Legislative Council was inaugurated in Madras by Lord Connaught. Only the moderates among the Congressmen attended the function. There were demonstrations against the visit of Lord Connaught. The mood of the people was reflected during the visit of the Prince of Wales later that year. Wherever he went, he was greeted with black flags.

violent when the police fired to disperse the crowd. They attacked the police station and killed 22 constables. At the meeting of the Congress Working Committee a week later, at the instance of Gandhiji, the non-cooperation movement was suspended.

The Congress suffered a split resulting in the formation of the Swaraj Party led by Chittaranjan Das and Motilal Nehru. The resolution they brought at the Gaya



C.R. Das



Motilal Nehru



Rajagopalachari

At the Ahmedabad session of the Congress, it was decided to continue the non-cooperation movement. A students conference in Gujranwala in Punjab resolved that students should boycott colleges and universities and take part in the freedom movement.

A demonstration by 2,000 Congress volunteers and farmers in Chauri-Chaura village in Gorakhpur district in 1922 turned

session that Indians should enter Legislative Councils and carry on non-cooperation with the government was opposed by the group led by C.Rajagopalachari.

- Shantineketan became the Visvabharati University—a world famous centre for the study of languages, religions, literature, music, and the fine arts.

(Next month : India becomes a Republic)



SAGA OF VISHNU

8. PARASURAMA AVATAR

Jamadagni fell down with a heavy thud as though he was dead. Parasurama was on his way home from the forest when he heard the news. He went mad with anger and grief and, sharpening his axe, he went to the town of Mahishmati seeking vengeance.

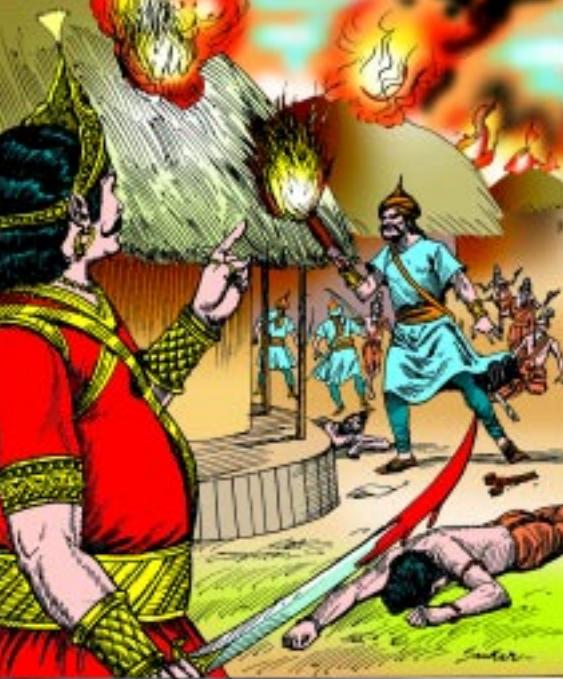
At Jamadagni's ashram, Parasurama's mother Renuka was sobbing inconsolably beside her husband's body. Sage Bhrigu happened to arrive there just then. He consoled Renuka and then with his yogic powers revived Jamadagni.

Parasurama arrived in a mighty rage at Mahishmati and found Karthavirya's soldiers beating the cow mercilessly because she was unable to provide what they wanted. The soldiers scattered before Parasurama's furious onslaught.

He then calmed the frightened cow and sent her back to the ashram. Parasurama went and stood in front of the palace and challenged Karthavirya.

"You evil man!" he roared. "The king should protect his people. But if he forgets his duty and oppresses them, he should be punished. Come out of the palace and face me, and take what you so richly deserve!"

The sight of the ferocious and frightening Parasurama was enough to drive away the guards and soldiers at the palace entrance. Those who remained were cut down. Wielding his axe like Death itself, Parasurama made his way into the palace. As he charged in, he roared out his challenge to Karthavirya. "You sinner!" he bellowed. "Where are you hiding? The time has



come for nemesis to catch up with you. A king who allows cows, brahmins, and sages to be tortured and oppressed in his kingdom deserves death.”

Karthavirya came out and attacked Parasurama with his thousand arms. Parasurama cut off Karthavirya’s arms like the dried branches of a tree. Karthavirya fell down dying. Then he remembered that he was actually the spirit from Vishnu’s Sudarshanachakra and had come down to the earth to work out a curse. Recognising Parasurama as an avatar of Vishnu, he died praying to Him.

Parasurama went back to the ashram and was very happy to see his father alive. “I’ve got rid of that wicked and sinful king,” he told him.

But Jamadagni was not pleased with Parasurama at all. He said, “What you

did is not something that is good for humans. You must atone for this act by going into the forest and praying to the gods for forgiveness.”

“Father,” said Parasurama, “when a king forgets his duty and becomes an oppressor, then anyone can punish him. I shall go to the forest and pray since *you* have asked me to, but not because I feel my action needs atonement.”

In the meantime, the thousand sons of Karthavirya gathered the entire Hehaya clan to which they belonged and attacked Jamadagni’s ashram. The sage was then in deep meditation and the soldiers cut off his head and threw it away. Jamadagni’s head rolled down towards some rocks and got lodged there. Renuka called out twenty-one times to Parasurama for help and then fell over her husband’s body weeping. The Hehaya clan, flushed with victory, then set fire to the ashram. Renuka perished in the fire weeping over her husband’s body.

Parasurama was suddenly disturbed in his meditation and he heard his mother’s voice calling out to him twenty-one times. Certain that there was something wrong, he used his powers to reach the ashram in one huge leap. But he was too late. The ashram was in flames and his parents were dead. The Hehaya Kshatriyas were attacking the ashram-dwellers and villagers mercilessly. Parasurama, chanting a

prayer to Lord Shiva, leapt at the Kshatriyas and cut them up like thorn bushes in the forest undergrowth. He then picked up his father's head from the rocks and said: "The fire in my heart has dried up my tears, but I promise that I shall use the blood of these very Kshatriyas to bathe your head and perform the last rites."

Then Parasurama climbed a high rock and roared out twenty-one times. "With this axe I shall get rid of all the Kshatriyas in this world!" His awesome voice and terrible vow echoed from the four directions so loudly that Brahma and many sages arrived at the spot and tried to dissuade Parasurama from carrying out his vow.

Maharshi Bhrigu said: "Son, God himself will take care of the seers and sages in the forests and punish those who harass them. It is not our duty, and this kind of action does not reflect well on us."

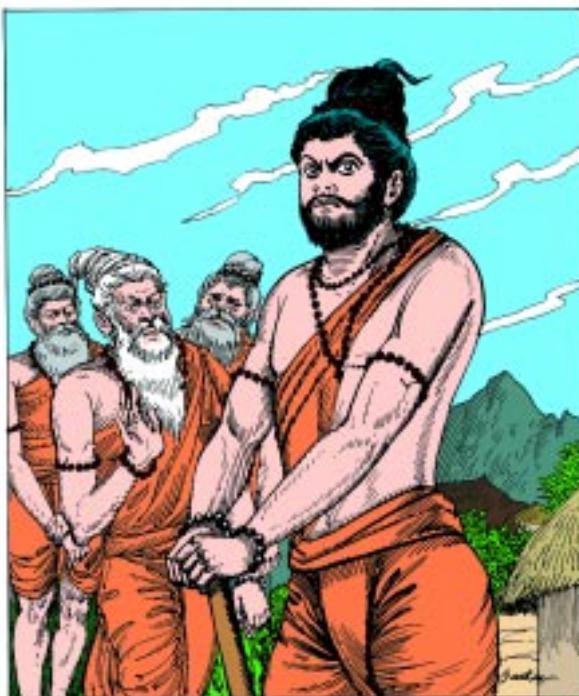
Parasurama answered: "O sage, God doesn't jump down from the sky to help us. He takes the form of a man and lives in this world. It is through humans that god's power works on this earth. When a man forgets his duty and tyrannises his fellow humans and when his behaviour crosses the limit, then God comes out in one of us and punishes the sinner. You are my seer and great uncle. Please consider me as one such human."

Parasurama then took leave of him

and went off to Mount Kailas in the Himalayas to pray to Lord Shiva for strength and power to fulfil his promise. He meditated and prayed to Shiva for a long time. Shiva was very pleased with his devotion and appeared before him.

Parusurama bowed to Shiva and said: "You are an all-seeing all-knowing God. Even an ant does not bite without your knowledge or permission. I do not have to explain or tell you anything. Please give me the power and strength to fulfil my vow."

Shiva, along with many powerful weapons, gave Parasurama a divine one. "This will be known as the *Bhargava astra* after you. You have been born on the earth for a divine purpose. There will



be no hurdles in your way. Go ahead and fulfil your destiny.”

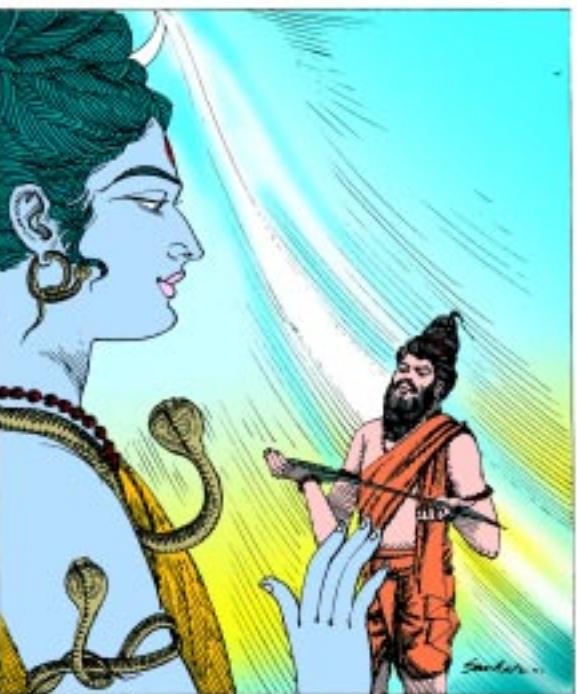
Thus blessed by the gods and determined to end the race of Kshatriyas, Parasurama left the Himalayas. The people, tired of the misrule and oppression of the kings, helped Parasurama wherever he went. The sons of Karthavirya who had

many other Kshatriyas got an army together and faced Parasurama in a battle at the place that was later to be known as Kurukshetra. But they were no match for the axe-wielding warrior. Parasurama bathed his father’s head in the blood of the Kshatriyas who had perished, and performed the last rites.

After that Parasurama set off on his mission once again. He marched all over the country looking for Kshatriyas whom he promptly fought and destroyed. The Kshatriyas, alarmed by this, hid their young sons in Brahmin households and many also joined such households to save themselves and their children. These children, when they grew up, once again gained control of their kingdoms, but Parasurama would not let them rule. He hunted them out and destroyed them again and again twenty-one times.

Finally, after the twenty-first time, Parasurama’s anger abated and he felt he had fulfilled his vow. He then handed over all the kingdoms he had conquered to Sage Kashyapa and set off for Mount Mahendra in the southern ocean to spend the rest of his time in meditation. Kashyapa distributed the kingdoms amongst the Kshatriyas who were hiding in Brahmin households and asked them to rule the land justly and well. Thus the Kshatriyas were once again established in the country.

King Raghu was an illustrious descendant of King Ikshvaku. He was



survived and many of the other Kshatriyas ran away from the town. Parasurama sent the *agneyastra* and burnt the town of Mahishmati. Flames engulfed the town for twenty-one days and in the end there remained nothing but ashes.

Karthavirya’s surviving sons and

so brilliant and famous that the dynasty came to be known as Raghuvamsa after him. In that dynasty or royal family was born to Dasaratha a son called Rama. Rama was an avatar of Vishnu born on the earth to get rid of the asuras who had once again started harassing humans so much that they could not lead a peaceful life. He also came to set an example of a perfect human being and king and to establish the perfect kingdom or Ramrajya.

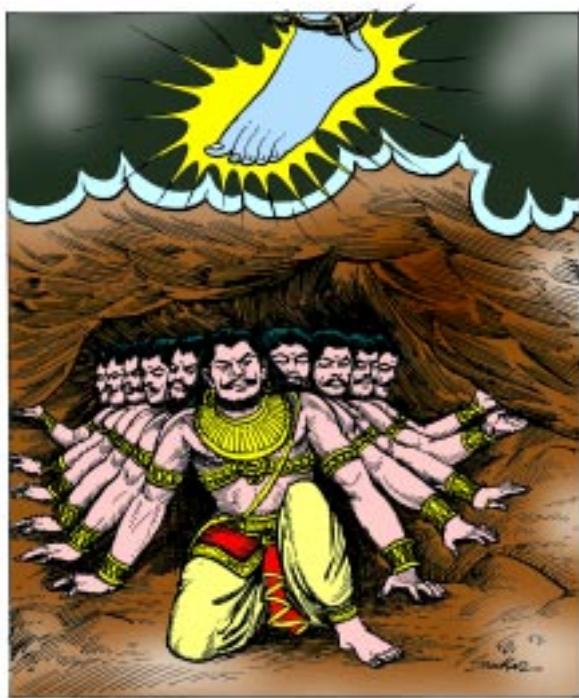
The two doorkeepers of Vishnu, Jaya and Vjaya, who had been cursed and so had to take birth three times on the earth as Vishnu's enemies, were now born as Ravana and his brother Kumbhakarna. With their destructive and arrogant behaviour, they caused untold suffering on Earth.

Ravana had prayed to Brahma and received a boon that no deva or yaksha or gundharva or any other divine would be able to kill him. He felt there was no need to include man in this list because there was no man on earth who was his equal in strength or power. And now that he was sure that he was invincible, he became very arrogant and treated everyone with a great deal of contempt. He also started harassing mankind and would not let them live in peace.

Kumbhakarna was a giant. He could eat a large quantity of food and when awake had the strength to destroy entire armies. He slept for six months of the

year and stayed awake for the next six.

Ravana chased Kubera out of Lanka and took over that kingdom and the marvellous *Pushpaka*, a vehicle that could fly. He gathered all the other rakshasas and asuras together and conquered many other kingdoms. His empire soon spread up to the Vindhya mountains and his arrogance grew. He decided that



he would not allow the rishis in the forests to carry out their worship or meditation in peace and delighted in disturbing or destroying their ashrams.

Ravana had ten heads and so was known as Dasanana or Dashakanta. He also had twenty hands. Once overcome with pride in the strength of his mighty

arms, Ravana shook Mount Kailas. Shiva then held him down with one toe and kicked him out. He flew out of Mount Kailas and fell heavily on a sharp rock. He screamed out in pain and hence was called Ravana, which in Sanskrit means crying or screaming. Then realising that he had angered the powerful Shiva, Ravana in repentance cut off his ten heads one after another and offered them to Shiva and became an ardent devotee of the Lord.

Ravana was as cruel and wicked as he was brave and mighty. He had a weakness for beautiful women and did not care if they were already married or whether they were interested in becoming his wives. In fact, in his arrogance he probably did not believe that any woman could really refuse him.

Maya's daughter Mandodari was Ravana's queen and wife. She tried to mend her husband's manners and habits. Ravana's youngest brother Vibhishana also constantly tried to wean his brother away from his evil ways. Ravana, of

course, was too drunk with power and pride to listen to anyone.

There was a Rajarshi (a king who had become a sage) called Krishdhvaja. He had a daughter called Vedavati who had been born to him by chanting the Vedas. She wished to marry Lord Vishnu. Ravana saw her and wanted her as his wife. He told Vedavati: "I'm mightier than Vishnu. Why don't you marry me and come to Lanka?"

Vedavati answered him contemptuously and Ravana lost his temper. He held her by the hair and pulled her with him intending to take her away by force. Vedavati was not afraid or overawed. She cursed him and said: "O you evil one! You have touched my body and polluted it. I shall at once give this body up. But remember, in my next birth I shall be the cause of your destruction at the hands of Vishnu in the form of Rama." With these words she entered a fire created with her yogic powers and was turned to ashes.

(To continue)

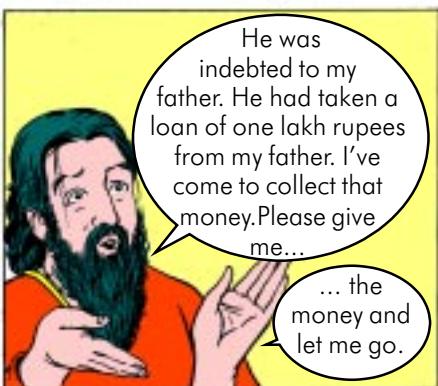
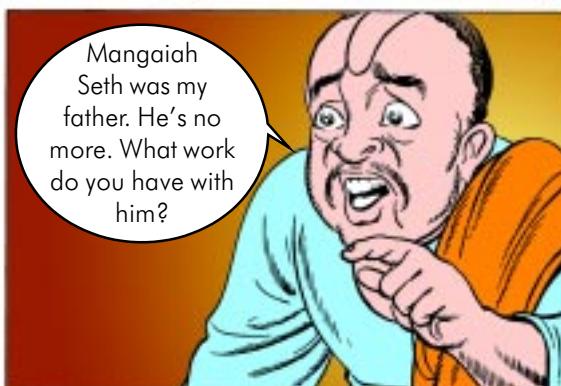


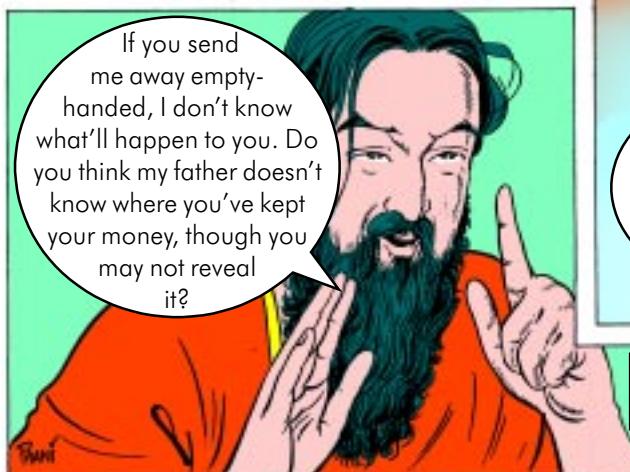
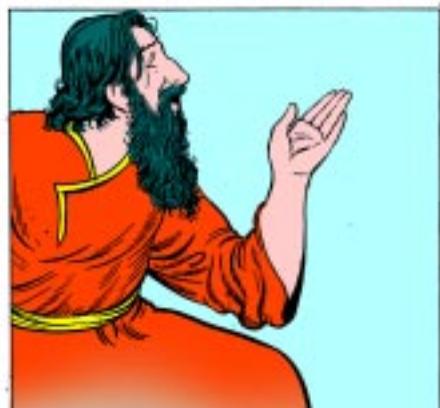
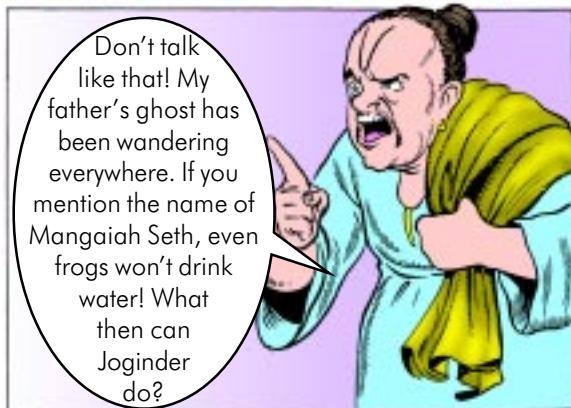
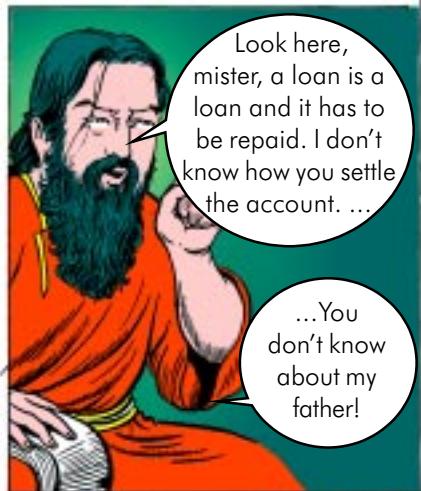
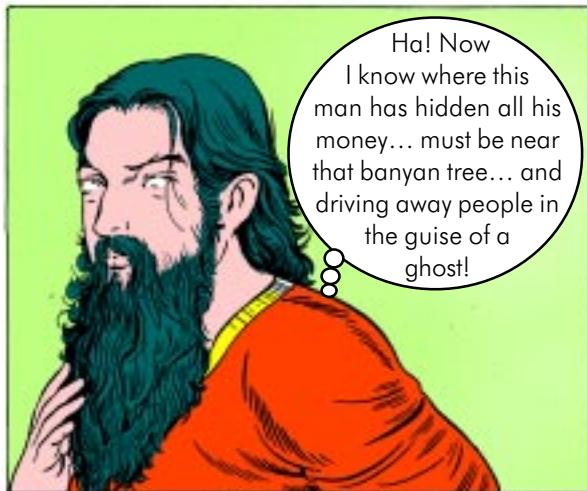
Samaritan Samir

(Continued from previous month): Samir and Sheru reach Mangalpura. The villagers are scared of a ghost. Samir sees Govind Seth beneath a banyan tree. Distinguishing himself as a sanyasi, he goes to the grocer.



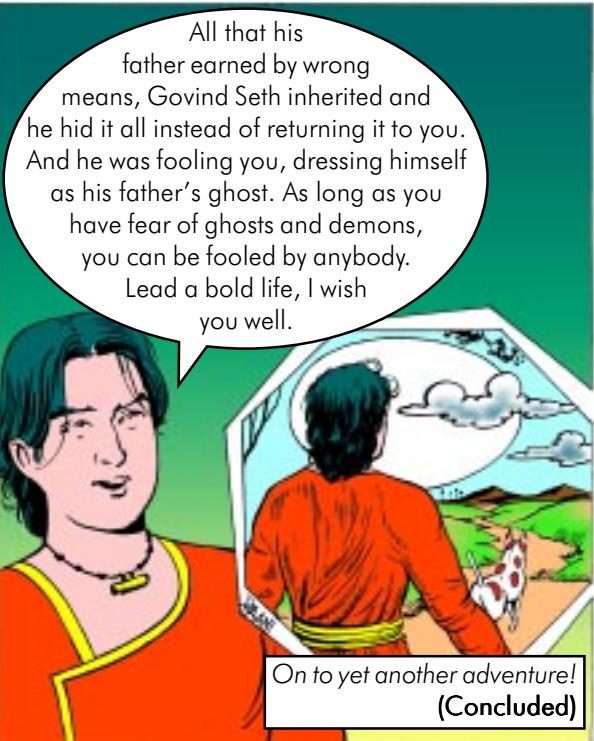
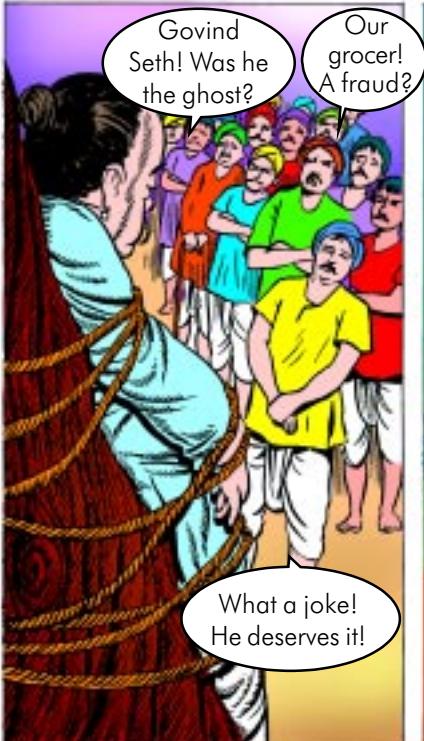
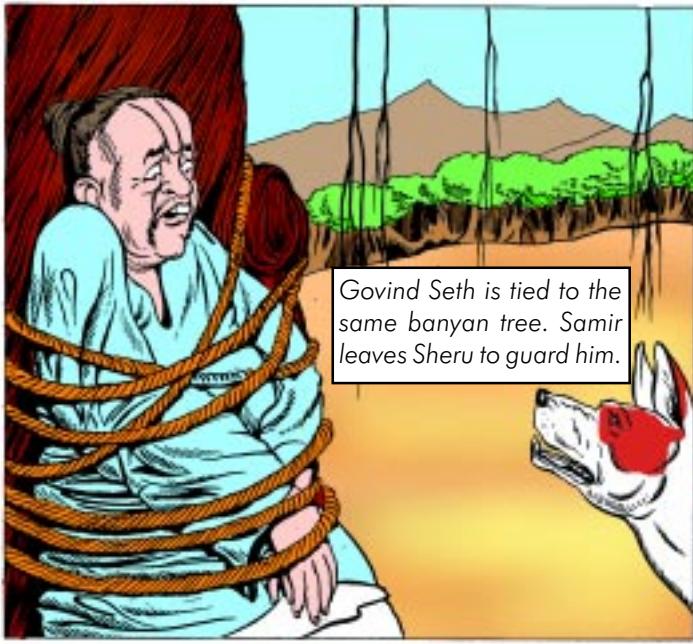
Govind Seth shows a seat for the sanyasi to sit down.





Samir leaves Govind Seth's house, contemplating his next action.

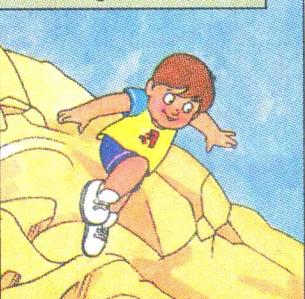




THE AMUL CHEESE BOY

IN PICNIC PANIC

One bright sunny day...



...a picnic is in progress.



Little Munnu Verma crawls away.



Suddenly, huge rocks come tumbling down the mountain.



Amul cheese boy eats an Amul cheese slice...



...and becomes strong and powerful.



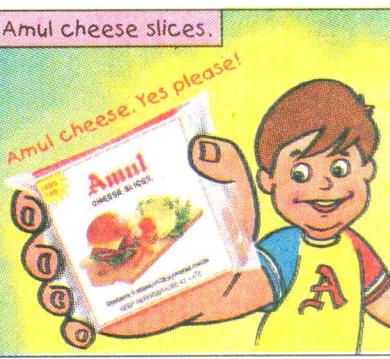
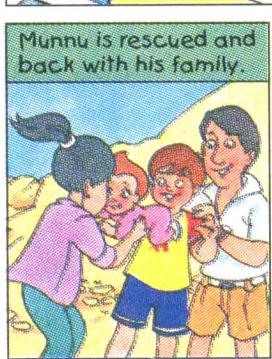
He smashes the falling rocks...



...reducing them to small pieces.



All thanks to the cheese that has more milk in it.

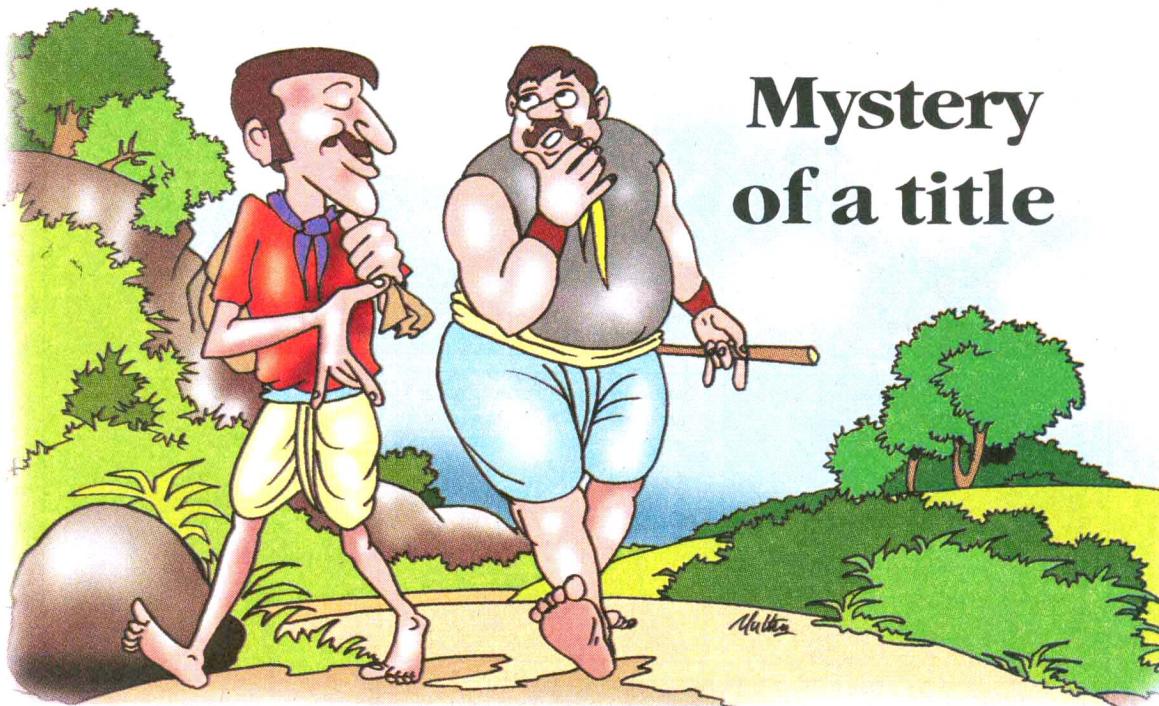


Munnu is rescued and back with his family.



Amul cheese slices.

Mystery of a title



In a village somewhere lived two thieves. One was called Crook and the other was called Major Crook. Crook was a big-built man and a very good wrestler. He could jump on anybody and make him cry for mercy. Major Crook, on the other hand, was a puny, thin man. Now Crook was quite envious of the other's title.

'Why should he be called Major Crook?' he often wondered to himself. 'What does he have that I do not?' Still there was nothing he could do about it. Everybody called him Crook and the other Major Crook. Titles of this kind are a matter of public opinion, after all!

One day, Major Crook got the news

that a rich trader in a village some two days' journey away had struck a good deal and had kept the money at home. He set off for that village to rob the man.

Crook met him on his way back. Looking at his bulging pockets Crook guessed that Major Crook had successfully carried out his raid. He decided to relieve him of his loot, so he accompanied him. They travelled together on the road politely speaking of this and that. At nightfall they found a room in a roadside hostelry and spread out their blankets to sleep.

Major Crook was soon snoring. Crook thought this was his chance and searched Major Crook's bed and

clothes for the money he was sure he had, but he could not find it anywhere. Not even a single coin did he find!

The next morning Major Crook soon got ready to leave, and Crook saw that his pockets were bulging once again. He wondered where Major Crook had hidden the money the previous night, but just could not think of a place he had left out in his search. Anyway, they continued on their journey together.

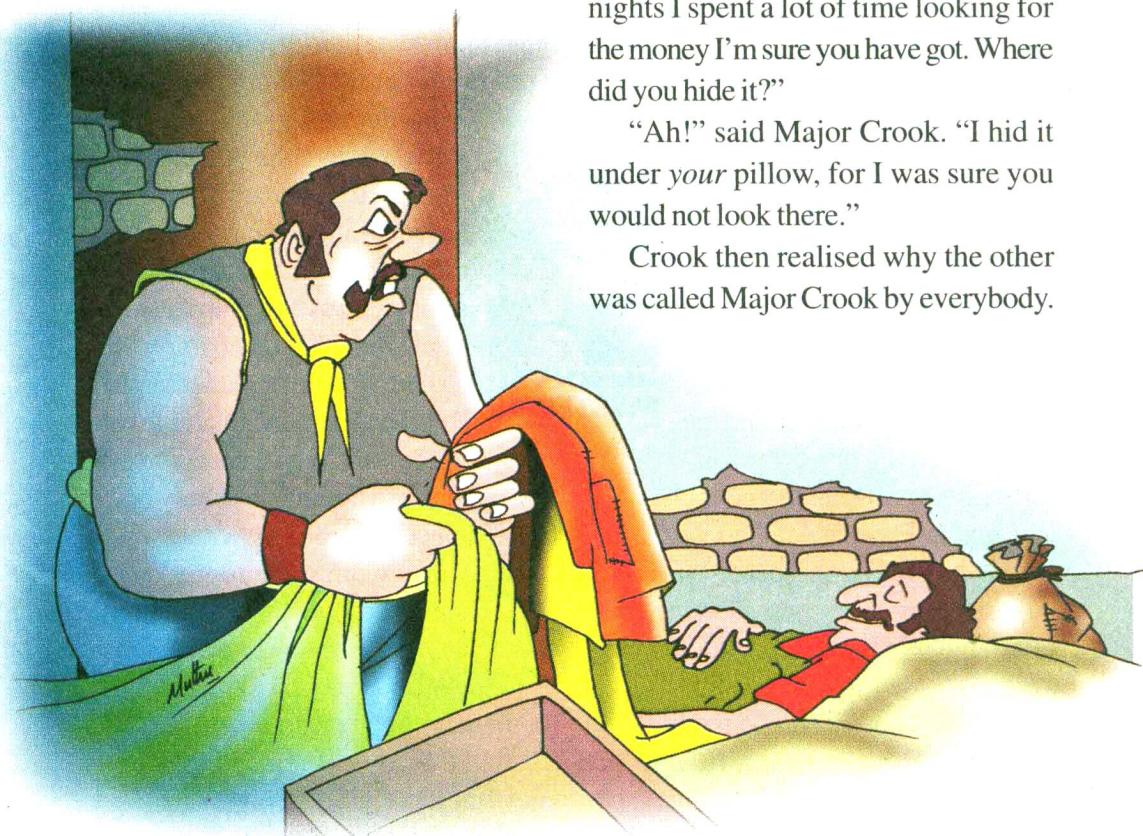
Once again they had to spend the night at a hostelry and like the previous

night, Major Crook went to sleep first. This time, too, Crook searched Major Crook's bed and clothes carefully. He even ran his hand over the rafters and the windowsill, but his search was fruitless. The next day when they were ready to leave, he saw that Major Crook had bulging pockets once again.

Soon talking of this and that, they reached the village and Major Crook's two huge friends met him at the village entrance. As they were parting, Crook asked Major Crook: "These last two nights I spent a lot of time looking for the money I'm sure you have got. Where did you hide it?"

"Ah!" said Major Crook. "I hid it under *your* pillow, for I was sure you would not look there."

Crook then realised why the other was called Major Crook by everybody.



ELUSIVE GUESTS FROM THE BLUE

"I see something above and ahead of me, and I'm still climbing. It looks metallic and is tremendous in size.... It's above me, and I'm gaining on it. I'm going to 20,000 feet!" Those were the last words of Thomas Mantell as he closely followed a mysterious craft in his fighter jet in the skies above Kentucky in the USA. For, later on that fateful day of 7 January 1948, the brave pilot was found dead in the wreckage of his airplane and the unknown flying object had disappeared leaving behind no trace.

Captain Thomas Mantell was leading a group of fighter jets on a routine training exercise, when suddenly the commander of the airbase ordered him to take a close look at a strange object in the sky. It had been spotted by several people on the ground, including the operators in the control tower. One such bewildered observer, who saw it through

his binoculars, exclaimed: "It's very white and looks like an umbrella! I just don't know what it is! It appears to have a red border at the bottom at times... and a red border at the top at times!"

What led the unfortunate Mantell to his death? Some believe, the alien spaceship he was pursuing attacked his plane and a mysterious ray burned him. There are others who think that he had chased the planet Venus! But the experienced and level-headed air force pilot could not

have mistaken a familiar heavenly body for an object described by witnesses as "a huge ice-cream cone topped with red". Then what could it be? Perhaps, it was, what has come down to be known by the popular acronym UFO, standing for unidentified flying object. The Mantell tragedy has remained one of the most puzzling mysteries of the UFO enigma.



But shortly before the term UFO came into existence, there was what is called the "flying saucer". A little over six months before the bizarre incident of Thomas Mantell, on 24 June 1947, a private pilot, Kenneth Arnold, was winging his way near Mt. Rainier, in Washington State, in search of a lost plane that had crashed in the mountains. All of a sudden, he saw nine crescent-shaped shining objects sailing at an incredible speed of 1,700 miles per hour, far greater than any man-made craft of the time. Arnold later said that the flying objects moved "like a saucer skipping across water" and an imaginative reporter at once coined the phrase "flying saucer" and the extraordinary happening hit the world headlines for the first time.

From Arnold's 1947 landmark discovery of the flying saucers—though investigators and scientists prefer the more exact term UFOs – began the modern UFO era. Ever since, for more than half a century, the phenomenon has occurred virtually in every coun-

try. Over 100,000 people claim to have witnessed what they believe were UFOs. It is estimated that, on an average, about 40 new cases are reported every day around the world. Eye witnesses are supposedly all normal human beings, from the common man in the street to physicists and astronomers. There are now permanent observers in 30 countries that keep a constant vigil on the sky for any possible UFO appearances. Interestingly, at times, a large number of UFOs are reported from a particular region or country over a short period of time. In the USA alone, in 1973, there were over 920 UFO sightings in the course of only a few weeks.

Jimmy Carter thus describes what he and twenty others saw in the evening sky of Georgia in 1973: "... It was big, it was bright, it changed colours and it was about the size of the Moon. We watched it for 10 minutes, but none of us could figure out what it was. One



thing is for sure, I'll never make fun of people who say they've seen unidentified flying objects in the sky!" After he became the President of the United States of America, Carter is on record as saying: "I'm convinced that UFOs exist, because I've seen one!"

Surprisingly, it has been found that most of the UFOs or about 90 per cent of them, when investigated, have proved to be IFOs or identified flying objects. They can be anything from distant airplane landing lights, ball lightnings, weather balloons, strange cloud formations, odd effects of light and shade in the twilight sky, planets, and other astronomical and meteorological phenomenon. The small but significant per cent of UFOs reported around the world that have remained unidentified and unexplained as natural phenomena, after experts have ruled out every known possibility, have indeed baffled man to this day. As no nation on earth is capable of producing these mysterious flying objects, could it be that beings from another civilization, in vehicles of superior technology, are patrolling our skies?

On 23 November 1953, Flight Lieutenant R. Wilson was on a training flight in an F-86 jet aircraft in Michigan, when he was instructed to chase an unidentified flying object that was picked up by the radar. The crew at the airbase



watched Wilson pursue the UFO for 160 miles. Then suddenly, both the flying bodies merged with one another on the radar screen. All efforts to contact Lt. Wilson over the radio failed. The region where this inexplicable event took place was thoroughly searched for the wreckage with no success. Flight Lt. R. Wilson had completely disappeared, leaving behind no trace of himself or his flying machine. Did the unknown spaceship abduct him and his plane?

As the sun set over the mountains of Reserve in New Mexico on the evening of 8 December 1981, Don Luscomb saw a cigar-shaped object as long as four 747 jets linked together, gliding across the twilight sky. Later J. Allen Hynek, director of the Center for UFO Studies, interviewed dozens of local people. Nine out of them testified that they had indeed seen the cigar shaped object just about the same time as Luscomb did.

Recently, a Press release from London said: "Nine new planets have been discovered orbiting distant stars, bringing the number of known planets outside our solar system to 51 and raising prospects that alien life may be found to exist." Then, are the UFOs spaceships from alien worlds? As Mitrovan Zverev, a Russian scientist, very rightly put it: "Something unknown to our understanding is visiting our Earth."



Know Your India

QUIZ

Come January and the people of India keenly look forward to watching the grand Republic Day Parade. Let us look at it from a new angle—a quiz!

1. When was the first Parade held?
2. Who takes the salute at the Parade?
3. Who receives him when he arrives at the saluting base?
4. Where does the Parade start from and where does it conclude?
5. The Parade is preceded by a solemn ceremony. Where does it take place? What happens there? Who is the dignitary who takes part in the ceremony?
6. On some occasions, yet another brief ceremony takes place at the saluting base, after the flag hoisting. What is it called?
7. Who was the chief guest at last year's Republic Day Parade?
8. How do the various States and Union Territories participate in the Parade?
9. Who leads the children's section of the Parade?
10. Which is the last event of the Parade?
11. Though not a part of the Parade, another event three days later concludes the Republic Day celebrations. What is it called? What is its significance?
12. What is the significance of the date January 26?

(Answers next month)



The bodyguard

Many years ago King Virabhadra ruled over Shivagiri. He was looking for a bodyguard. Many men skilled in the martial arts applied for the job. The king wanted a really able and efficient person. He called his minister and asked him to test them well, so that the best person could be chosen.

The minister took his job seriously and, after putting the men through gruelling tests, he finally chose two young men called Gajasena and Ugrashakti. However, the king needed only one bodyguard and the minister could not choose between the two. He felt they were equally skilled and strong.

So he took them to the king and told him: "Your Majesty, both these men are equal in every respect. I have tested their knowledge and their skills. Both are brave and strong and will make good

bodyguards. Now you've to make up your mind and decide which one of them you would like to employ."

"All right," said the king. "Send them to me and I shall decide which one should be made my bodyguard. How about the others? Can they be employed somewhere? Are they any good?"

"They are also very brave and fit young men, and we can certainly employ some of them in the army straight away. The others will need training before they can be taken in," answered the minister.

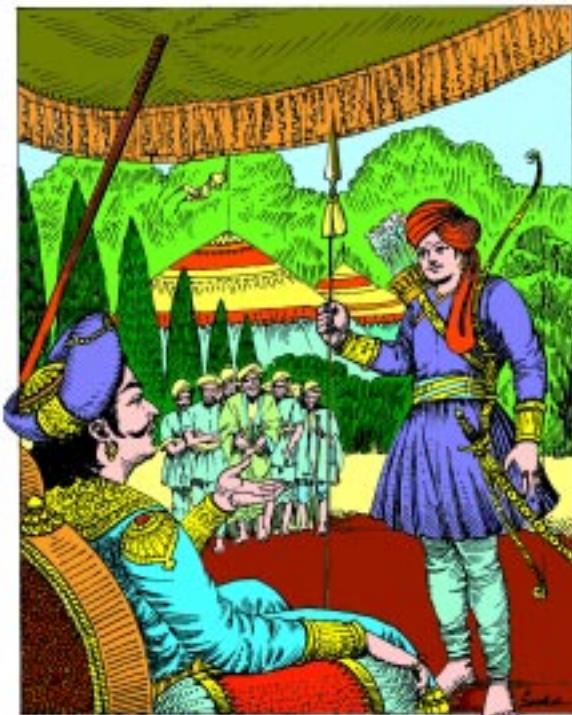
"Good," replied the king. "Maybe you can take care of that while I test these two young men. I shall be going to the gardens in the hills tomorrow. Send one of them with me as a bodyguard."

The next day before sunrise Ugrashakti and the king set off for the

hill district on their horses. Ugrashakti was well armed and looked very fit. He had a sword at his waist, a bow and arrows on his shoulders, and a spear in one hand. He looked every inch a royal bodyguard.

It was afternoon by the time they reached the beautiful hill resort. When the king was resting in the guest house after lunch, some villagers went to him and said, "There is a tiger on the prowl in this area, Your Majesty. It attacks our goats and cows and other animals. It has made life very difficult for us. We are also worried that it may turn into a man-eater any day. We've to stay indoors with all our doors and windows shut. In fact, we've come to your campsite risking our lives. Please help us and get rid of the tiger for us."

The king called Ugrashakti and said: "Ugrashakti, go with these villagers and kill that tiger."



"I shall at once do that, Your Majesty. I don't need so many weapons to kill a mere tiger. I shall just take this spear and will be back immediately after getting rid of that troublesome tiger."

He returned after some time, saying, "I looked everywhere for the tiger, but couldn't find it at all. Maybe it has gone back into the jungle."

Virabhadra just nodded his head. Soon afterwards they returned to the palace. A week later, the king again set off for the same resort. This time he took Gajasena with him as his bodyguard. After they reached the guest house,

once again the villagers came with the same complaint. Once again the king asked the bodyguard—Gajasena—to go with them and kill the tiger. But Gajasena did not move from his position.

The king ordered him to go with the villagers in a louder and angrier voice. "Can't you hear me?" he shouted. "Why

aren't you doing what I'm asking you to?"

Gajasena replied respectfully: "Your Majesty, please forgive me. I'm only your bodyguard here. I cannot leave you alone," he explained. "Let the villagers go to the capital and get help from there. My first duty is to protect you, so I can't leave you unprotected."

"You're insulting me in front of so many people by not obeying me. Do you know the punishment for anyone who refuses to obey my command?" thundered the king in a rage.

"I'm sorry but I cannot obey this command of yours. I cannot leave you alone. I'm your bodyguard," was all that Gajasena said in answer.

Virabhadra did not say anything. He at once set off for the capital after reassuring the villagers that he would send help from the capital as soon as possible.

That night the king sent for the minister for a private audience. He told him what had happened on his two trips to the hills. Then the king asked him to appoint Gajasena as his bodyguard and to find a suitable place for Ugrashakti in the army.

The minister was surprised. "Why do you want a man who had disobeyed you?" he asked.

The king smiled and said: "Yes, Gajasena did disobey me. He knew that he could be put to death as a punishment. Yet he was intent on doing his duty as a bodyguard and did not allow himself to be distracted. The duty of a bodyguard is to make sure that the king is protected all the time. He ensured that he did only that. Ugrashakti is very brave, but not as intelligent as Gajasena."

That's how Gajasena became King Virabhadra's bodyguard.



Murder! Luckily no killing!

Reader Simanta Gandhi Biswal of Talcher wants to know the meaning of “to scream blue murder”.

If anyone screams blue murder or shouts bloody murder (a variation of the expression), it only means that he or she is making a lot of noise and fuss about a happening that he or she did not like. This is a very informal expression.

What is meant by the idiom “to draw the short straw”, asks reader Jyotiranjan Biswal of Durgapur.

When one draws or gets the short straw, it means that he or she is chosen from among several people to perform a job or duty that he or she will not enjoy. In a school in South India recently, a student belonging to a low caste was asked by the teacher to clean the classroom dirtied by his classmate. We can say, the boy got the short straw. Poor chap, he was chosen for the ‘dirty job’, though it was someone else who dirtied the place. What an irony!

An exciting assignment for YOU!

Over the next few months we will be running a feature on River Krishna. We invite our young readers, especially those living in places on the banks of the river or near the river, to write and tell us about

- What the river means to them
- Stories connected with the river that they know
- Any interesting experience they may have had connected with the river

If the entries are interesting, we will publish them in the feature.

- Mention your name, sex, age, class, and name of school, and give your home address. Send your photo, too, by 10 January 2001.

Let us know



Why is the colour black associated with death?

Kumudini Shah, Bhopal

- ❖ Black is not a colour in the strictest sense of the term. When there is an absence of colours, it is described as black. When a death occurs, the near and dear ones of the deceased feel that their lives are deprived of any colour, meaning, there is no joy, no happiness, no solace or comfort. As a mark of mourning, they don black clothes. We often hear of black-flag demonstrations, or of people wearing black bands on their arms to indicate sorrow, disappointment, protest or tragedy. Announcements (not reports) of deaths are often printed within black borders.

Is rubber the basic material in chewing gums?

Padmanabha Panicker, Kollam

- ❖ The chewing gum is made of a milky white juice from the chide tree, like the latex that comes from the rubber tree. The chide or *Manilkara zapota* is a native of Central America and grows wild. The local people called "chicleros" (there you have the origin of the name "chiclets") take the milky juice by making incisions on the tree and allowing the juice to drop into small bowls fixed on the tree. The juice is collected and boiled to provide the gum base for the chewing gum. Nowadays, some synthetic material also is used as gum.

These days books come with bar code. What is its purpose?

Bidyut Chatterjee, Shillong

- ❖ The purpose of bar code is commercial. When decoded the bar code, which appears in thick and thin parallel lines separated by uniform gaps, provides vital information regarding the price, size, item description (like fiction, biography), identification number, number of copies printed and available, etc of the product or book. The bars help preparing bills electronically. Most countries have made it imperative for all consumer products to carry the bar code.

The other day I was travelling by air when there was a blinding lightning. But neither the aircraft nor we passengers were affected. How was it?

Mohan Kumar, Bangalore

- ❖ We hear of people (mostly VIPs) wearing bulletproof jackets, don't we? Aeroplanes have a metallic shell of aluminum, which is a good conductor of electricity. The current caused by a lightning just grazes the outer body without affecting the plane and the passengers inside.

Reader V.Seshaiah writes from Nizamabad:

I am a regular reader of *Chandamama* in Telugu for the last 40 years. I always enjoyed the lovable stories and I still feel that I am below the age of 15. I would like you to repeat the stories of 1960s and '70s— like the Jataka tales, Gundu Bhimanna stories, and Paropakari Papanna series. I would like to see them again with the same drawings from your artists Shankar and Chitra. They will definitely attract the present generation. I remember the Panchatantra stories for their sweet language. Please restore the Photo Competition, which used to appear on a full page.

A PICK FROM OUR MAIL BAG



From Delhi comes this sent by Dr. Pratibha Bhattacharya:

Chandoba (Marathi) has been a magazine after my own heart. I first saw the magazine at a friend's house 48 years ago and I have since been an ardent admirer. On evenings, when we had only a lantern, I used to pore over the stories with great joy. The magazine has indeed given me many moments of happiness. Today I am 55 years old and still a member of the Chandamama family.

Our young contributor, Nitya Tripuraneni, Ohio, USA, writes:

Thank you for publishing "Lucky Charm" (November 2000). It looks great with the illustrations and everything. It looks fantastic, with the changes you made, than the original copy.

This came by e-mail from K. Sudhir

I am in 12th standard. I regularly read *Chandoba* (Marathi). I like it so much. I am writing this to wish U happy Diwali.

This comes from Asif Lakhani, Mumbai, Thane

I like almost all the stories, my favourites being Vikram-Vetala and The Golden Throne. Please start crosswords, word-finders, riddles and other puzzles. Your different contests, Let Us Know, and Towards Better English are good. Can we have stories based on phrases?

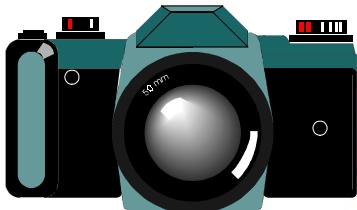


PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other?

You may write it on a competition post card and mail it to:

**Photo Caption Contest, CHANDAMAMA
(at the address given below)**



to reach us before the 25th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.



The Prize for the November 2000 contest goes to :

C.L. VENUGOPAL

No.44, Behind Sri Raghavendra Swamy Math
Sreenagar, Bangalore - 560 050.



***The winning entry :
"Dependant" - "Independent"***

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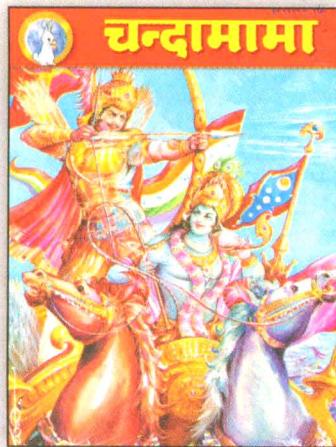
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